

Much bickering in the marsh scares off butterfly of goodwill

James Clappison, a junior minister, yesterday identified yet another group of satisfied customers under Tory rule. Butterflies. "They will benefit," he said, "from our action plan." The butterflies in question were the Marsh Frith, whose special needs had been raised at environment questions by Paul Flynn, the Labour MP for Newport W. The action plan in question was the "Biodiversity Plan", which Clappison commended.

Coexistence in the Westminster biosphere of the eager, puppy-faced Clappison and the bilingually lugubrious Flynn is in itself evidence of biodiversity. There was something heart-warming in the sight of both taking a break from the ideological struggle to rally to the cause of the Marsh Frith. "That delicate and most beautiful living jewel of nature," breathed Flynn. We could extract the Tory and Labour MP from the sour Westminster air and picture both chasing across Welsh grasslands, jewelled

butterflies fluttering at their knees. Then Flynn spoiled it. He suggested that it was after 17 years of Tory misrule that the ranks of the Marsh Frith had been depleted to 60 per cent of their numbers under Labour. There are caterpillars, we reflected, who have only ever known Tory rule. moths who cannot remember the winter of discontent. Thatcher's pupae. Clappison retaliated by implying a likeness between Mr Flynn and the Dinky Moocha Moth...



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

and the magic departed.

Such a shame. The only other available topic of debate this week seems to be hypocrisy. A chap isn't a chap in the Parliamentary Conservative Party these days unless he's found yet another way of calling Labour "hypocrites". This presents difficulties as, like "liar" but unlike the term

"Dinky Moocha Moth", the term "hypocrite" is out of order in the chamber. If used by one member of another. You can brand a party, an argument, or even (possibly) a speech as hypocritical; you can probably accuse the Government as a whole, or the Labour Party, of hypocrisy; but you must stop short of

actually calling another MP a hypocrite. Members strive ingeniously to get round this prohibition. Yesterday produced two rather cunning routes. Environment Secretary John Gummer told Labour's Nick Raynsford (Greenwich) what he would need to do in order "that you are not seen as hypocritical". Miss Boothroyd flinched, but let it pass. Later, bearded Paddy Tipping (Lab. Shrewsbury) evened the score for Labour. How, he asked at Prime Minister's

Questions, would John Major describe a man who promised not to raise VAT, then did "as a hypocrite, or a liar?" "Or 'skint' maybe?" muttered a colleague. At the dread concurrence of both the "L" and the "H" words, Miss Boothroyd flinched again. Major paused a moment, in case she could intervene. But Teacher was not sticking up for Johnny, so he had to plough on. In fact the Prime Minister had another good day. His best moment was when he

quoted (without attribution) the phrase "governments cannot run companies", waited for the shrieks of Labour outrage, then revealed that the quote was from Tony Blair. The Labour Leader has been knocked off his stride, and did not recover it yesterday. It lifted Tory spirits. But hardly the human spirit. Near the end, Mr Major's throat all but gave out and he began to croak, miserably. We prescribe a break from all this, and a weekend's walk where there are butterflies.

Major and Hume strike positive note on Ulster assembly

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND NICHOLAS WATT

JOHN MAJOR appeared to be making headway last night in his efforts to put the Northern Ireland peace process back on track. John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, emerged from 90 minutes of intensive talks with the Prime Minister at Westminster to declare that they were working towards a common goal. Mr Hume's remarks and his more relaxed manner were in stark contrast to his demeanour last week, when he denounced Mr Major's plan for an elected body in Northern Ireland to break the deadlock over the IRA's refusal to begin disarmament before all-party talks.

The nationalist leader had accused Mr Major of buying Unionist votes by sidelining the Mitchell report's "compromise" proposal of IRA decommissioning during rather than before all-party talks. In a joint statement with Downing Street last night Mr Hume said that they had exchanged views on their "common wish for a comprehensive negotiated peace settlement" and agreed to meet again soon. "There is a process under way which we are pursuing with the Prime Minister," he said. It is understood that at the meeting Mr Major reaffirmed his intention that the elected body should be a "passport to talks" and was not an attempt to resurrect a Stormont-style

assembly dominated by Unionists. It would have a finite life with no legislative, administrative or executive powers. The Prime Minister is this week due to meet Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionists, and David Trimble, head of the Ulster Unionists. He is expected to telephone John Bruton, the Irish premier, this week. Earlier yesterday Sir Patrick Mayhew, who was present at the meeting with Mr Hume, met the Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams at Stormont. Afterwards Mr Adams, who left last night for a meeting in the United States with Tony Lake, National Security Adviser to President Clinton, repeated his strong opposition to Mr Major's proposed body, although he did not rule out participation in elections.

The Northern Ireland Secretary sounded a more optimistic note, saying that he took encouragement from Sinn Féin's agreement to meet him at short notice. During the meeting he reassured Sinn Féin that the Government did not want to set up a Unionist-dominated assembly. Sir Patrick's conciliatory tone, which contrasted with Mr Major's forceful challenge to Sinn Féin last Wednesday, underlined the Government's determination to take on board nationalist concerns before drawing up any firm proposals for elections.

The Northern Ireland Secretary said parties would be elected having passed an electoral test of commitment to a peaceful democratic process. Ministers envisaged that the elected body would select from its number representatives for a negotiating body. He insisted that the Government would not retract the proposal, having identified it as a means of creating the necessary confidence to move the peace process forward.

Letters, page 15

Terrorist killing raises fear of feud

By NICHOLAS WATT
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE murder of Gino Gallagher, leader of the outlawed Irish National Liberation Army, in West Belfast yesterday prompted fears of a bloody internal feud. Mr Gallagher, 32, believed to have become INLA chief of staff last year, was shot in the head at a social security office on the Falls Road.



Gallagher: had opposed terrorist ceasefire

Assistant Chief Constable Bill Stewart, who heads the RUC in Belfast, said last night that there were "strong indications" that Gallagher had died as a result of an INLA feud. The organisation has had a series of violent schisms since it was formed in 1975. "The murder was carried out with all the ruthless characteristics of outrages the people of Northern Ireland had prayed they had seen the last of," Mr Stewart said. Mr Gallagher, who had two children, was bitterly opposed to the ceasefire. He was shot just before 11am while he sat to

sign on. A man got up from behind him and fired at point-blank range a number of times before walking out through the offices to the Falls Road. Baroness Denton, the Northern Ireland Minister, condemned the killing as brutal and callous. She said it showed "in the most chilling way" the importance of decommissioning terrorist weapons.

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More than 500 workers in the City of London filed St Helen, Bishopsgate, during their lunch hour yesterday to celebrate the reopening of the church four years after it was damaged by an IRA bomb. The 12th-century stone building, overshadowed by high-rise glass and steel office blocks, was unscathed for 850 years until the bomb blew out its stained glass windows, showered the pews with masonry and buckled its roof on April 12, 1992. Yesterday the worshippers streamed in to see the results of the £3.5 million restoration, which has swept away the cluttered Victorian interior and returned it to the simpler arrangement after the Reformation. Prebendary Dick Lucas, rector for 35 years, delivered a sermon from the Gospel of St Mark before the congregation sat down to £2.50 sandwich lunches. Many were returning for the regular Tuesday services for City workers, Tony Peacock, 67, of Wembley,

City church restored to full service

north London, who had been attending since 1961, said: "I like the space and light and general airiness. With any ancient church there is always a history of damage from fire, earthquake, war, vandalism or sometimes just neglect. They are living buildings." Susan Baxter, who had travelled from Maidstone, Kent, said: "I am rather old fashioned. I like the wooden pews. It was much darker before. I think I could get used to it." Mr Lucas said: "People are very relieved and very excited about the restoration. They like what they see. Everything is clear, bright and beautiful."

Woolf to speed up medical claims

Faster and simpler procedures will be outlined today for medical negligence claims, which cost an estimated £125 million a year. Lord Woolf, who is chairing an inquiry into civil justice, says that a new culture must be developed "in which it is accepted that doctors, like others, make mistakes". The proposed reforms, to be put to a conference of health service professionals, are designed to make claims less lawyer-driven and adversarial. They include a new fast-track procedure to settle claims of less than £10,000 and compulsory out-of-court settlement for claims of less than £3,000. A consultation paper published yesterday said that the new methods would be suitable for claims where financial compensation was not the main aim: "Some victims want an explanation or apology rather than financial compensation, but are forced into protracted litigation." Dr Thomas Stuttaford, page 5

Claire murder charge

A 19-year-old student will appear before magistrates in Cardiff today charged with the rape and murder of Claire Hood, 15, more than a year ago. Claire's body was found in woods on the St Mellons estate in Cardiff on January 19, 1995, only a few hundred yards from her home. Police have carried out DNA tests on more than 2,000 local men in the hunt for the killer.

Nigerian wins asylum

Akin Adegboye, a Nigerian who claimed he would be the target of a death squad if he was returned to Lagos, is to be allowed to remain in Britain with his wife. It was announced yesterday. An immigration tribunal in Glasgow ruled that the couple, who have been in Britain since 1989 and have two young children, had a "genuine and well-founded" fear of persecution if they returned to Nigeria.

Good response to appeal

Detectives hunting the rapist of a woman who had been under police protection said yesterday they were delighted with the public response to their appeal. More than 100 calls were taken after Cambridgeshire police issued an artist's impression of the long-haired attacker who stalked the victim for five months. Police said the woman was provided with advice and security devices she agreed were sufficient.

Winchester pupil dies

A sixth-former who had just won a place to read Classics at Merton College, Oxford, was found dead in the library of Winchester College, Richard Metcalf, 18, of Wimborne Minster, Dorset, who had been treated for depression, was discovered by a fellow pupil. An empty pill bottle was nearby. Police said there were no suspicious circumstances. An inquest is to be held.

Highly rated pigsty

Ratepayers in Kent have been told they could be charged £70,000 to return a building used as a pigsty for 50 years to residential use. English Heritage has said it has the power to renovate the remains of a thatched lath-and-plaster cottage dating from the early 17th century and present the bill to Gillingham Borough Council. The building near Lower Rainham was Grade II listed in 1994.

Patten attacks 'daft' campaign to oust Clarke

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

SENIOR Conservatives called for an end to an apparently high-level whispering campaign against Kenneth Clarke last night. One former Cabinet minister told Tory MPs that they could be sealing their fate at the general election if they failed to support the Chancellor.

A spate of hotly disputed reports have suggested either a rift between Mr Clarke and the Prime Minister or a series of Cabinet defeats for Mr

Clarke. John Patten, the former Education Secretary, said yesterday that Mr Clarke deserved the support of everyone in the Tory party and that those trying to remove him were "daft and short-sighted".

Mr Patten's intervention coincided with an interview by Mr Clarke in which he denied claims that he had accepted that he was coming to the end of his government career. In what appeared to be a concerted move to rally behind Mr Clarke, senior right-wing ministers said he had been treated disgracefully by colleagues

issuing leaks against him, because of his strongly pro-European stance.

Mr Patten is a friend of Mr Clarke, but opposes his line on the single currency. His speech at the Carlton Club marks the first serious acknowledgement of a campaign against the Chancellor. Mr Patten said that, whatever anyone in the Tory party thought about Mr Clarke, his style, his views on Europe or his Hush Puppies for that matter, they would be daft to fail to understand the economic indicators, including the best run of low inflation and the

lowest rate of income tax for half a century, and the lowest mortgage costs for 30 years.

Only the "most kamikaze Tory politician" should overlook the fact that the Chancellor was not delivering some ephemeral pre-election one-year wonder, but laying much more substantial foundations for decades ahead. "I would say to those bent on disturbing the political, and thus the economic, calm at No 11, you are daft and short-sighted, because you may well be signing your political death warrant in your own seat."

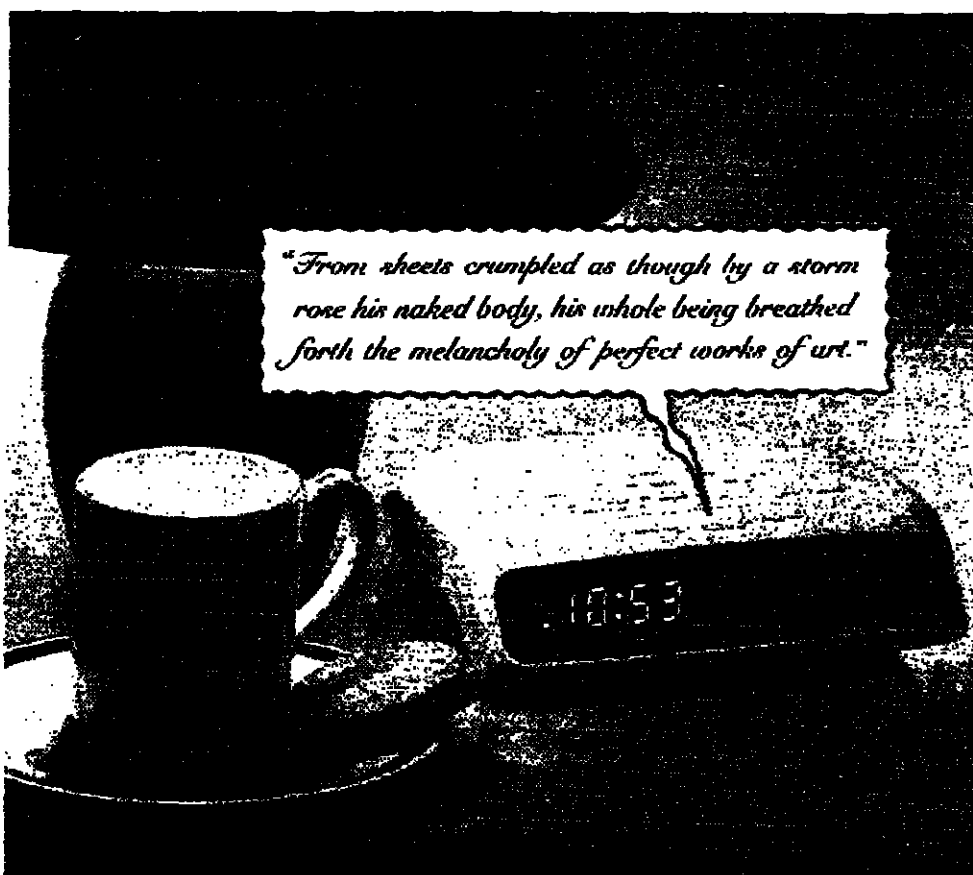
Catholic chaplain for Queen

By ALAN HAMILTON

A ROMAN Catholic has been appointed for the first time as an honorary chaplain to the Queen. Buckingham Palace confirmed yesterday. Monsignor Noel Mullin, 48, principal chaplain to the Royal Navy since 1983, will be one of 12 military chaplains who hold the title at any one time. Palace officials said that Mr Mullin, who served in the Falklands campaign and

with the Royal Marines in Northern Ireland, had been recommended by the navy. His title is purely honorary, but he will take part in Forces' religious services attended by members of the Royal Family. Mr Mullin, a native of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, said last night that his appointment was a recognition of inter-church co-operation in the navy's chaplaincy service. The Rt Rev Francis Walsley, Anglican bishop of the Forces,

welcomed the appointment. "Her majesty has honoured numerous chaplains from the other churches, but this is the first time that a Catholic chaplain in any of the Service has been honoured in this way," the bishop said. Last November, the Queen became the first reigning monarch since the Reformation to make an official visit to a Catholic church service, when she attended Westminster Cathedral.



"From sheets crumpled as though by a storm rose his naked body, his whole being breathed forth the melancholy of perfect works of art."

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Victim's radio call hours before he was murdered enthused over paradise on earth

Gunman admits killing spree on millionaire's boat

FROM BOB GRAHAM IN ANTIGUA

FOUR people aboard a British millionaire's racing yacht were tortured and killed when they anchored overnight off the Caribbean island of Barbuda. The four — two Britons and two Americans — were bound, gagged, stabbed and blasted with a shotgun, a court was told yesterday.

They were the alleged victims of three young West Indians who believed that the 65ft racing ketch *Computacenter Challenger*, registered in Jersey and owned by Peter Ogden, chairman of one of Britain's biggest computer dealerships, had a substantial amount of cash on board.

The reality was that the yacht carried little cash or items of value, the High Court



of Antigua was told at the opening of the murder trial in St John's. Three men from Barbuda, where the *Princess of Wales* holidayed last month, appeared before the court charged with the murders of Ian Cridland and Thomas Williams, both British yachting enthusiasts, and a middle-aged American couple, Bill and Kathy Clever.

Mellanson Harris, 23, and Marvin Joseph, 22, pleaded

not guilty to the murder charge, which carries a death penalty. Donaldson Samuel, 23, pleaded not guilty to manslaughter. He will be sentenced at the end of the trial, which is expected to last about two weeks. Samuel is also expected to give evidence for the prosecution against the two co-accused.

The three men were arrested after a four-week investigation by Scotland Yard detectives called in to investigate the killings. The Scotland Yard team was in Antigua investigating the killing of the former head of Customs and Excise. They were immediately transferred to Barbuda.

Initially, local police believed the deaths of the four people aboard the *Challenger* were connected to an international drug-smuggling ring or piracy. But a detailed investigation, led by Detective Superintendent Michael Lawrence of Scotland Yard's international and organised crime department, drew a different conclusion about the alleged motive for the first murders in almost 70 years on the tiny island of Barbuda, 27 miles north of Antigua.

When the Yard team investigated the recent background of the three suspects they discovered two had spent a lot of time in 1993 and 1994 in New York, where they were involved in armed robberies.

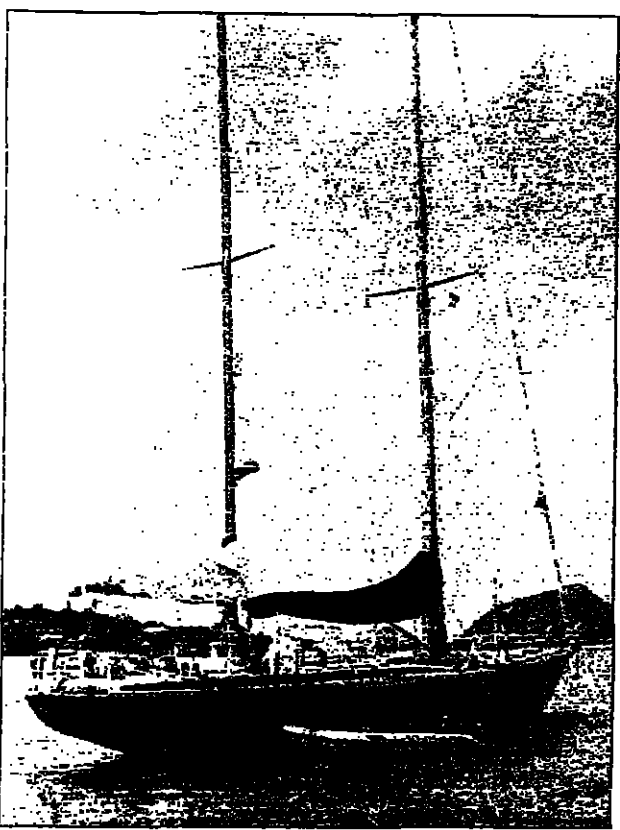
On board the ketch were Mr Cridland, 33, the skipper, and Mr Williams, 22, his deckhand. They were described as typical of the "yachties" who make their living crewing the boats of the rich and famous.

Mr Cridland, who was 6ft 2in and powerfully built, had spent five years working as a geologist in the United States before returning to his first love, sailing.

Mr and Mrs Clever, from California, had flown to Antigua from Britain for a week's fishing and swimming. The



Mellanson Harris, above left, Donaldson Samuel, centre, and Marvin Joseph arriving in handcuffs at the court in Antigua yesterday at the start of their trial; and three of their alleged victims: Kathy and Bill Clever, below left; and Ian Cridland, the yacht's skipper



The *Computacenter Challenger*, owned by Peter Ogden, chairman of a large computer dealership

Clevers had met Mr Ogden, a flamboyant Northern entrepreneur, during a Mediterranean sailing holiday five years earlier and had kept in touch. When he bought Jethou, one of the smallest Channel Islands, he asked the Clevers to look after his six-bedroom manor house there and to help to entertain important visitors. The Caribbean trip was their reward for a job well done.

Mr Clever, 58, had been educated at an American naval academy and had spent his life at sea working for the US Government and as a diver on the east coast. The couple had sailed their own 40ft yacht across the Atlantic. Mrs Clever, 52, was a French-trained cordon bleu cook.

The Clevers flew into Antigua on January 24, 1994, and joined the *Challenger* in English Harbour, a popular



destination for the international boating set. Two days later the four set sail for the deserted, western-facing beaches of Barbuda.

Mr Cridland radioed back to Antigua after the first night and enthused: "This is one of the most beautiful places on the planet."

Within hours he and his sailing companions were hit by a combination of multiple stab wounds and

shotgun injuries. The murders were discovered by a party of French holidaymakers on board the *Margot One* near by who became suspicious after noticing no sign of life on the *Challenger* for two

days. One of them later said: "There was something strange about her as she gently rode the waves. Everything was quiet — too quiet. Then as we got closer there was a smell in the breeze. It was the smell of death."

Rex Mackay, QC, for the prosecution, opened the case by telling the five-man, four-woman jury: "The islands of Antigua and Barbuda are blessed with beautiful sands and waters which causes visitors and tourists to come to our shores and spend their vacations here."

"Our constitution does not discriminate against anyone, and whether they are citizen or visitor they are entitled to the full protection of the law. These people deserved the protection, but it was not given."

The trial continues.

Sinclair to marry C5 with Reliant Robin

BY JONATHAN PRYNN TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

A CAR combining features from two of Britain's most lauded vehicles is being planned by the inventor Sir Clive Sinclair. The man who created the failed C5 confirmed yesterday that he had been in talks to cross it with a fibreglass Reliant Robin.

The project to unite the three-wheelers into a new "about-town" electric car is on hold as Reliant Motors was put into administration before Christmas with debts of £15 million and administrators are talking to potential buyers.

Sir Clive, also the brain behind Sinclair computers, said: "We hope funds can be found to get the situation resolved. We have been talking for a few months. The vehicle would be a lightweight but robust design for local use. It would be highly reliable, cost next to nothing to run, and cost very little to service as there is very little to wear out. It won't take you from London to Scotland, but you would use another car for that."

The proposed electric car would be about the size of a Rover Metro. A prototype is expected to be available in about two years' time if the project goes ahead.

Sir Clive launched the C5 — a one-man, plastic, electric trike — in 1985, but it quickly became an object of ridicule. Production ceased after six months, but they have since become collectors' items.

'Serial killer strangled youths to silence them'

BY PAUL WILKINSON

THREE youths were murdered and their bodies set ablaze to stop them revealing that their killer was homosexual, a court was told yesterday.

John Milford, QC, for the prosecution, told Leeds Crown Court that the killings were so similar they must have been the work of the same man. Steven Grieveson, 25, of Sunderland, denies the murders of Thomas Kelly, 18, and David Hanson and David Grieff, both 15.

The deaths were regarded at first as unconnected incidents involving experiments with drugs. It was not until six months after the last death when pathologists voiced their suspicions that detectives realised they were searching for a serial killer, Mr Milford said.

Two of the country's most eminent pathologists, Dr Iain West and Professor Peter Vanezis, examined the victims and found that all three had been strangled with ligatures which had left no marks. The bodies were all found badly

burnt and close to the centre of Sunderland.

Mr Milford said: "Grieveson was a homosexual who was unwilling or unable to accept his sexuality. There are two possible reasons why he killed these youths — to prevent them from revealing he had demonstrated his sexual preferences or because he simply enjoyed killing them and setting fire to their bodies."

Mr Milford said that pathologists could not immediately find signs of murder despite police suspicions. But when Dr Vanezis and Dr West were called in for a second opinion they found all three had been strangled with a ligature such as a cord or a scarf. The similarities between the deaths were so striking that each must be the work of the same man, Mr Milford said. All occurred after dark, but not late at night. All the victims were former or current pupils of Monkwearmouth Comprehensive.

He said that the youths were

known to have experimented with drugs and solvents. Thomas Kelly's badly burnt body was found in an allotment greenhouse in November 1993. Mr Grieveson had been seen with him earlier, and had travelled with him on a bus from the city centre.

He had been strangled with his own scarf and then burnt on a fire made from scrap floorboards. Mr Grieveson told police that he had been with a friend that night, but the friend could not remember this.

David Hanson's body was found in an empty house in February 1994, with fabric from a dust sheet round his neck. A fire had been started under his body. Mr Grieveson's fingerprint and a print from his shoe were found.

"He claimed they had been left there when he burgled the house days earlier. However, his accomplice told police that Grieveson had worn rubber gloves during the robbery."

David Grieff, a friend of Hanson, died 17 days later in a shed next to the greenhouse where Thomas Kelly died. He was strangled with his own belt and thrown on a bonfire of newspapers. DNA in semen found on his body matched samples taken from Mr Grieveson. Only one in 200,000 would be similar. Mr Milford told the jury.

He said that David Grieff had set out to buy cannabis that night, and Mr Grieveson had offered to help him but lured him to the allotment for sexual purposes. The trial continues.



The victims: David Grieff, left, Thomas Kelly and David Hanson were all set alight after being killed

Aspinall celebrates victory with tigers

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY

JOHN ASPINALL is promising to romp with his tigers on Sunday after winning the right for keepers to go back into the big cats' enclosures at Howletts Zoo Park. An industrial tribunal yesterday overturned a council ban imposed after a keeper was mauled to death in 1994.

The ruling saves the jobs of 150 catering, gate and administrative workers. Mr Aspinall had threatened to close his two Kent zoos to the public if he lost. The

tribunal accepted Mr Aspinall's argument that the keepers act as surrogate mothers for the baby tigers and have to teach them the skills they need to survive when released into the wild.

It said the zoo, which is soon to release gorillas in Africa, "operates a very successful breeding programme with the medium to long-term objective of reintroducing into the wild animals which have been bred in captivity. The practice of bonding and the continuation of contact with hand-reared tigers after they have

reached young adulthood is one essential feature of the way Howletts operates."

Mr Aspinall said yesterday: "The tribunal has understood the importance of bonding. This, of course, is revolutionary because 95 per cent of zoos in this country would not agree with them."

The tribunal chairman was outvoted by the two other members to overturn the Canterbury City Council order under the Health & Safety at Work Act.

Conservation row, page 10

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Drug-taking 'has become the norm' among teenagers

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

EXPERIMENTAL use of illicit drugs by young people is so widespread that it must be considered the norm, a government report says. Surveys show that up to 60 per cent of under-16s have been offered drugs and more than a third of these have tried them. Most suffer no ill-effects but those who develop problems are being ignored by the health service, which has "virtually no provision" for drug-addicted children and adolescents. Since 1990 the number of drug addicts under 25 notified to the Home Office has increased by 20 per cent. Keith Hellawell, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, said at the launch of the report that some children had resorted to prostitution to fund their habits. "There are prostitutes in Bradford, 11, 12 and 13-year-olds, who are crackheads. We can't lock them up; all we can do is take them back to their care homes," he said. The report from the NHS Health

Advisory Service, appointed by the Government to monitor standards of care, says many young people are trying a range of drugs and that the age of initiation is dropping. "So many young people use or experiment with alcohol and illicit drugs that this behaviour cannot be justifiably described as abnormal. The vast majority of them do not go on to develop destructive, harmful or offending lifestyles," the report says. The widespread use of Ecstasy was highlighted last year with the death of Leah Betts, who collapsed at her eighteenth birthday party. The inquest into her death, which opens today, is expected to conclude that she died of drinking too much water, causing her brain to swell, in the mistaken belief that this was an antidote to the ill-effects of the drug. Efforts to warn children off drugs, such as the "Just say no" campaign, have little effect

but permissive attitudes by parents may encourage drug use. "Parental tolerance of drug use and their approval of drinking were significant predictors of drug use and the amount of drinking by adolescents," the report says. Mr Hellawell said police tactics had changed. The proportion of cautions issued to young people involved in first-time drug offences had increased from 1 per cent to 61 per cent during the past decade. "Drugs are part of the youth culture and we have to accept that. The problem is not going to be resolved by putting them before a court," he said. A boy aged 11 has been arrested on suspicion of supplying amphetamine at school. The boy, who attends a secondary school in Kirkby, Merseyside, was released on police bail after questioning. Children and Young People: substance misuse services (HMSO: £12)



Paul McCartney and some of the international performing arts students at yesterday's inauguration in Liverpool

McCartney fulfils Liverpool dream

By KATE ALDERSON

PAUL McCARTNEY returned to Liverpool yesterday for the inauguration of the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, the realisation of a seven-year dream. The former Beatle has seen his school, the Liverpool Institute High School for Boys, converted into a centre of excellence for 200 budding performers. He said the school had given him, a boy from a poor background in Speke,

the belief that he could succeed and conquer the world with a combination of love, passion and hard work. "We can't inject the kids with talent, but we can help to nurture what talent they've got and show them the pitfalls so they won't fall into them themselves," McCartney told students and guests at the ceremony. In an emotional reference to his deceased parents, Jim and Mary, he said: "I can't help thinking about how proud my mum and dad would have been but I can't go

into that because I would start crying." The institute - Lipa - which cost £15 million to set up, has received donations from sources as wide-ranging as the EC, the National Lottery, showbusiness stars and Liverpool children. The Queen, who will perform the official opening ceremony in June, has also made a private donation. McCartney will teach song-writing classes at Lipa, where the first students began their studies earlier this month.

Dead citizens' charter urges better funerals

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A CHARITY that aims to improve the way death is dealt with has said the average funeral is a "miserable and disappointing" affair with the dead buried or cremated as if on a production line. Bereaved families are often pressured into expensive funerals only to see their loved ones dispatched in dull services conducted hurriedly by priests who do not know them, it says. The National Funerals College, based in London, is launching a campaign today to bring back spiritual and moral meaning to the funeral service, which they believe lacks "meaningful symbolism, dignity, adequate time and comfort for those who mourn". It is publishing *The Dead Citizens Charter*, which says people should take control of the service from the funeral directors, clergy and local authorities who own most crematoriums and cemeteries.

The charter is the inspiration of Lord Young of Darlington, 80, founder of the Consumers' Association and a guiding light behind the Open University. He has been campaigning for more uplifting and personal ceremonies since the death of his second wife, Sasha Moorsom, who died of cancer three years ago after 33 years of marriage. Lord Young, the charity's founding president, said: "We are concerned that local authorities, which own nine tenths of crematoria, have a vested interest in rushing people through in the short time allowed, in order to keep to their budgets. The Department of the Environment has encouraged local authorities to sell off their crematoriums to private business, which largely means funeral directors. Bereaved people will have even less choice if the crematorium operates a system favouring clients of its owners. The charity says people should be given detailed information about prices and crematorium ownership. It should be made clear that people have the right to nominate who conducts the funeral service. Services should include an appreciation of the person who has died. Dominic Maguire, spokesman for the National Association of Funeral Directors, said: "The association welcomes any document which can contribute towards the quality of funerals and make the service more sensitive to the needs of families."

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Research will examine health of former troops and the incidence of abnormal births

MoD orders study of 'Gulf War syndrome'

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A FRESH study into claims by 700 former servicemen and women that they are suffering from "Gulf War syndrome" was ordered by the Ministry of Defence yesterday. Evidence of abnormalities among babies born to Gulf veterans will also be examined.

Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, announced the move after seven leading medical experts told the ministry last week that further studies were justified. Vice-Admiral Tony Revell, the Surgeon-General, said he hoped that the studies would reassure Gulf veterans that the ministry was doing everything possible to examine their fears of a war-related illness. The ministry has examined 350 veterans and found no evidence of a common syndrome.

A series of epidemiological studies will be commissioned to compare the health of Gulf veterans with similarly matched groups of servicemen and women who did not go to the Gulf. This study, which could take up to three years, will also focus on the number of birth defects among children born since the Gulf War.

Veteran associations said there were at least 60 known cases of abnormalities among babies born to Gulf personnel. However, Sir Colin Berry, a leading authority on birth defects at the Royal London Hospital and who will take

part in the study, said yesterday that one in 40 births in the United Kingdom — live and stillborn — had serious defects. The study will seek to discover whether the number of defective births among Gulf War veterans is statistically unusual.

More than 51,000 British servicemen and women went to the Gulf. Sir Colin said that about 15,000 births would have taken place since the war from a group of that size, so a figure of about 375 defective births could normally be expected.

Some of the new studies will be conducted by the ministry, but universities and other



Soames made his move after advice from experts

research facilities will also be commissioned to carry out work. The project will be overseen by the Medical Research Council.

Mr Soames also announced that research would begin into the possibility of an interaction between the vaccinations given to all service personnel in the Gulf to protect them against chemical and biological attacks, and the Naps tablets (nerve agent pre-treatment sets) distributed to soldiers expected to face the greatest risk of Iraqi nerve-gas. Admiral Revell said that Naps on their own were harmless and could be taken in large doses, but studies were needed to see if there could have been any interaction with the vaccinations.

Of the 37 countries that contributed troops to the Gulf War coalition, only Britain, the United States, Canada and Norway have had cases involving the so-called Gulf War syndrome. It also appears that only Britain, the United States and Canada provided the Naps. Admiral Revell said there was a "polarisation of opinion" that Naps might be "the villain of the piece".

The United States sent 500,000 troops to the Gulf, of whom about 17,000 still serving have registered with the Pentagon as suffering from Gulf War syndrome.

A spokesman for the Pentagon said yesterday: "We don't

recognise Gulf War syndrome. We distributed the nerve agent pre-treatment sets. They were made widely available and were given to those who might be exposed to nerve-gas attacks."

However, there were no complete records of who took Naps on a regular basis. The official said: "This was a hurry-up operation. We wanted to get the forces out there, fight the war and get home again and many of the medical records have not been recovered. We have taken steps to improve the procedure for our troops now serving in Bosnia."

He said that the vaccinations were given to protect the troops from botulism, anthrax and other potential biological attacks. "We knew that Saddam Hussein had used nerve gas against his own people and it would have been unconscionable for us not to have provided protection for our troops."

Thousands of other cases of illnesses suffered by American troops have been registered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The department set up a Persian Gulf register with 54,000 names of veterans who came forward with complaints, only 13 per cent (about 7,000) of which were health-related. Many have reported illnesses for which at present there is no medical explanation.



Harry and Alison Hurst with Harry Jr, who was born with a third ear

Veterans' children born with defects

By OUR DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

HARRY HURST was born with a third ear. The four-month-old boy is one of about 60 babies known to have been born with abnormalities whose fathers fought in the Gulf War. Harry Hurst senior, who served with an ambulance unit in the 1991 conflict, is also suffering from what is claimed to be Gulf War syndrome.

Mr Hurst, from Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, is convinced his son was poisoned in the womb by the same anti-nerve gas drugs he believes affected his own health. Harry is to have an operation in March to remove the growth on his right ear.

Mr Hurst, who works as a driver for a plastics company, welcomed the announcement yesterday of a full medical inquiry into the birth defects of children born to Gulf War veterans and the further studies into Gulf War syndrome.

He said: "I don't think there is any doubt that there is a Gulf War syndrome. I have aching limbs and I forget things easily and I have a bad chest permanently, which I never had before."

He added: "Harry's growth is a third of the size of a normal ear and is in front of the proper ear."

His wife Alison, 27, said: "Harry hasn't been the same since he came back from the conflict. When little Harry was born we became convinced something was seriously wrong."

In another case, Sarah Whitehead, 30, from Shanklin on the Isle of Wight, gave birth to a baby boy with muscles missing from his left shoulder and arm. Ben, 2, was also born with webbed fingers, although surgeons have since rectified the condition.

Mrs Whitehead's former husband, Paul, served in the Gulf War as a corporal in the Royal Engineers. She fears that more defects may emerge as Ben grows; before Christmas, doctors discovered that one of his heart valves was not working properly.

Questions and suspicions in long search for the truth

What is Gulf War syndrome?

So far, 700 Gulf War veterans have complained of a range of illnesses including aching joints, loss of memory, dizziness, headaches, skin complaints, depression and chronic fatigue. More serious illnesses include kidney failure and motor neurone disease. All have been included by the veterans under the general name of the syndrome.

What is supposed to be the cause? First, veterans assumed that they had suffered from some form of chemical or biological attack in the war. There were several alarms of imminent attacks and a Czech unit

responsible for detecting chemical agents in the air was reported to have found traces of mustard gas and Sarin nerve agent, although it turned out to be high-octane missile fuel. The official line is that there was no evidence of any use of chemical or biological weapons by the Iraqis. Some veterans with illnesses were not in the areas subject to alerts. A second theory was that they had been affected by pollution from oil wells burning. Finally they blamed the "cocktail" of injections and tablets they were given as antidotes to chemical and biological attacks.

What was this cocktail?

The full details are classified — one of the complaints of the veterans — but they were injected to counter anthrax, botulism and bubonic plague. The tablets are called nerve agent pre-treatment sets, or Naps.

What are Naps?

Naps contain pyridostigmine bromide (PB), which protects neurotransmitters carrying messages to the brain. As the drug Mestron, it has been licensed since 1955 for use in the treatment of a nerve condition, myasthenia gravis. Overdoses can lead to nausea, heart abnormalities, agitation, excessive dreaming,

fatigue and involuntary muscle movements, leading ultimately to paralysis. There is no evidence that it can cause birth defects. All troops in the Gulf took the tablets every eight hours throughout their tour of duty. At the time of the Gulf War, the MoD had not obtained a licence for the use of PB in Britain.

What has the Ministry of Defence done about the syndrome claims?

An appeal was made to all veterans claiming to be suffering from the syndrome, and an RAF physician, Wing Commander Bill Coker, began medical examinations in October 1993. So far 350 have been

examined. Although 14 per cent of those who came forward were "serious medical cases", he concluded that the range could not be classed under a single heading, nor could they be attributed directly to Gulf service. The MoD arranged for the Royal College of Physicians to carry out a medical audit of the first 100 cases examined by Wing Commander Coker. The college approved the MoD's medical checks. The ministry has kept in touch with the Pentagon in Washington. The United States is spending £8 million on researching the syndrome, and some evidence suggests that side-

effects of nerve gas agents can be heightened by exposure to insect repellents and insecticides.

Had the MoD conducted research into long-term effects of a cocktail of injections and tablets to counter chemical agents and nerve gas? No. Studies by the MoD's chemical and biological defence establishment at Porton Down, Wiltshire, concentrated on short-term side-effects. There was no investigation into possible consequences of combining the tablets, injections and vaccines over a short period. Some soldiers said they received as many as nine inoculations in one day.

Test-case soldier must wait

JUDGMENT was reserved in the Court of Appeal yesterday over a soldier's claim that a howitzer blast permanently damaged his hearing. Richard Mulcahy, 31, a former artilleryman and Gulf War veteran, is suing the Ministry of Defence.

The Ministry of Defence says that public policy and the efficiency of the Armed Forces demand that the case be struck out, to prevent combat-effectiveness being jeopardised by fears of compensation claims.

Lord Justice Neill, sitting with Lords Justices McCowan and Glidewell, said the case raised "very important points" and reserved their decision with no date set.

Seaweed bacterium could lead to drug breakthrough

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

SCIENTISTS believe that an organism found growing on seaweed on a Scottish beach could destroy the antibiotic-resistant bacterium MRSA, which can be fatal and is becoming more common.

The new organism, a bacterium, was discovered on seaweed in North Berwick, East Lothian, by scientists at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. Professor Brian Austin, of the department of biological sciences, is optimistic that an antibiotic could be produced from the organism that would kill MRSA, or methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus.

MRSA is a common bacterium carried in the nose and skin of about 30 per cent of the population, but can prove deadly if it enters the blood.

stream. A recent *Panorama* programme suggested that 50 people a year die of MRSA, which has developed a resistance to most antibiotics. In recent months a number of hospital wards throughout Britain have closed because of outbreaks of infection caused by MRSA. The only antibiotic that can combat it, vancomycin, is expensive and there are fears that MRSA may soon become resistant to it.

The newly discovered bacterium, as yet unnamed, produces a compound that destroys MRSA. Professor Austin said that experiments had shown its effectiveness.

He believes that pharmaceutical companies, which have traditionally sourced their antibiotics from moulds

in the soil, should look to the sea for the next generation of the drugs. The research on the new organism was begun in the mid-1980s and Professor Austin has not yet found a commercial partner to develop his work. He is cautiously optimistic that his discovery will lead to a useful drug, but says it will take millions of pounds and at least a decade before it is available.

"We have been working on the project periodically since about 1986 but we dusted it down again recently because of the growing interest in MRSA and other bacteria which are less responsive to traditional antibiotics," he says. "I believe that marine biotechnology is the way forward for the development of future antibiotics."

Doctors caught in a legal minefield

THIS is one of the times of the year when doctors may seem as attentive as they are worried. They have just received their latest copy of the *Journal of the Medical Defence Union*. The union provides professional advice, and legal cover, if a doctor is sued by an aggrieved patient. The union journal always makes anxious reading and inspires that feeling of "there but for the grace of God go I" in all but the most confident.

In one quarter last year the union settled the five largest claims for nearly £1 million as



MEDICAL BRIEFING

well as a host of smaller ones. One of the lesser cases involved the misdiagnosis of chest pain. Chest pain is a problem that is confronted in most surgeries, for patients are concerned in case they have heart disease, but a survey carried out at a diagnostic centre some years ago

showed that a far more common cause was pain from an irritated nerve near the spine.

The patient whose case was cited in the union journal was sent to a consultant physician who carried out routine tests, which demonstrated that the pain was indeed coming from his back. The patient's spine was osteoporotic — men too, get osteoporosis — but several of his vertebrae had collapsed. Unfortunately, the doctor did not sufficiently heed the blood results, for although they gave some results which made cancer of the prostate unlikely — the consultant physician had thought of this — they did show an elevated ESR, the test which is abnormal in many cases of malignancy and inflammatory disease.

The physician also, in the opinion of the lawyers, did not pay sufficient regard to the radiologist's suggestion that, as well as a collapsed vertebra, one of the patient's

other spinal bones looked a little suspicious. The suspicious area was a secondary tumour from the prostate. Prostatic cancer quite frequently spreads to the bones.

The case was seen by the physician before the prostatic specific antigen test was a routine measure. That test has made the diagnosis of prostate cancer easier. As well as illustrating the importance of an elevated ESR, the union's case history also demonstrates the lack of early urinary tract symptoms, all local signs. The consultant had examined the prostate and thought it healthy.

Cancer of the prostate is the most common cause of death from cancer in men. An increasingly ageing population is vulnerable even without the added risks of 20th-century life — earlier sex, many sexual partners and a fat-rich diet. Male patients who develop sudden back pain and have any urinary tract symptoms should see their doctor, who, mindful of the union's report, will arrange X-rays and blood tests.

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Travelling public barred from InterCity 'ghost trains'



Short: told by staff that the train had run empty

By JONATHAN PRYNN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

A HANDFUL of passengers are being heavily subsidised to travel on almost empty InterCity trains to London Waterloo. They can travel on the "ghost trains" for as little as £20 from Edinburgh or £10 from Birmingham, far cheaper than the lowest British Rail fare.

However, the tickets to London can be bought only as a package with bookings on the Eurostar service to Paris or Brussels and are not available for travel solely within Britain. Domestic passengers are forbidden to board the special

trains, even though there is often only one person to a carriage. European Passenger Services (EPS), the British Rail-owned company that operates Eurostar, was forced to lay on the trains last summer because of technical problems that delayed the start of direct Eurostar services to the regions. These will not now begin before this summer at the earliest.

Meanwhile, an InterCity 125 diesel train runs each way once a day between Edinburgh and Waterloo and Manchester and Waterloo. The service, which enjoyed one of its few busy days when England played France at rugby in Paris earlier this

month, has had minimal publicity. Clare Short, Shadow Transport Secretary, said it was "bizarre" that a nearly empty train could not pick up other passengers. "I found out about using the wonderful Eurostar to go to Paris. As it turned out, the timing from [Birmingham] New Street didn't suit me. But staff told me the train had carried nobody or frequently just one person."

A spokesman for EPS said the train was forbidden from carrying domestic passengers under the terms of its operating licence and admitted that there are times when it is not as busy as we hoped it

would be. There was no point in marketing it, he said, because it would be replaced by the far superior Eurostar direct service to the regions within months. It is planned to carry thousands of passengers on up to five Eurostar trains a day: the journey time between Edinburgh and Paris will be 8½ hours and 5½ hours between Paris and Manchester.

EPS, which will require a total of £200 million support from the Government in the present financial year, declined to estimate the cost of running the stop-gap InterCity service. However, rail experts said it was likely to have been granted

special discount rates for hiring the trains and track access charges because it is obliged to run the services under the terms of the Channel Tunnel Act.

The first privatised rail service, operated by the bus company Stagecoach, which is now running South West Trains, will leave Twickenham in southwest London for Waterloo at 5.10am on Sunday.

A few minutes later, the other two lines that have been sold — Great Western and LTS (London Tilbury and Southend) Rail — will start their services, the Cardiff to London InterCity and the Shoburys, Essex, to Fenchurch Street.

Protesters charged over jet incident

Three protesters caused about £1 million damage to a Hawk jet trainer after breaking into a British Aerospace military aircraft factory. Lytham magistrates were told, Joanna Wilson, 32, and Andrea Needham, 30, both of Northwood, Merseyside, and Engla Kronlid, 27, of Oxford, were charged with damage and entering the factory with intent to cause damage. The women, who were protesting about the sale of jets to the Indonesian Government, which is occupying East Timor, were remanded in custody.

Mother's hope

The mother of Louise Smith, the teenager missing since Christmas Day, said she had not given up hope that she might be alive. Miss Smith, 18, was last seen leaving a nightclub in Yate, near Bristol.

Act of pollution

Philip Jackson, whose mill stream in Somerset, Somerset, was poisoned by mercury last summer, dumped contaminated mud outside the county council offices to protest about clean-up delays.

Eagle owl alert

Cat and dog owners in Essex have been told to keep pets indoors after an eagle owl with a 5ft wingspan escaped from a house in Canvey Island. A police spokesman said: "He will be looking for lunch."

McVicar bailed

John McVicar, a 1960s bank robber who was once Britain's most wanted fugitive, was given bail by South Western magistrates, London, accused of causing a neighbour in Battersea actual bodily harm.

Bug mystery

An investigation has failed to establish how a bug entered the public water supply in south Devon and made hundreds of people ill last summer. A report found no explanation for the outbreak.

Llama farmer

A farmer has bought a llama to protect his sheep from dogs and wild animals. Rob Hyden, who lost 25 sheep last year at his farm in Bucks Green, West Sussex, said the llama was capable of killing a fox.

Council censured

The local government ombudsman has ordered Mid Suffolk council to pay a tenant £50 after it told social services in a letter about his rent arrears that he had no friends and spent too long in the pub.

Breakaway threat over university entrance fee

By DAVID CHARTER AND NICHOLAS WOOD

A PROPOSAL to charge undergraduates a £300 signing-on fee prompted a furious dispute yesterday between vice-chancellors and raised the prospect of a breakaway by elite universities.

The Prime Minister urged vice-chancellors to abandon their plan, but indicated that the Government was powerless to intervene.

Supporters of the plan said that some of the most prestigious universities would break ranks and charge students up to £1,000 unless vice-chancellors agreed to the flat-rate entry fee at an emergency meeting on Friday.

Opponents said it could discourage up to 10 per cent of would-be entrants. Several former politicians said they would not introduce the fee even if the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals passed the proposal. Scottish and Welsh universities, which have escaped the 31 per cent cut in capital spending imposed on English universities by the Treasury for 1996-97, also expressed reluctance to support the plan.

John Major told the Commons: "I see no need for

universities to introduce top-up fees. They cannot complain about how they have been treated by the Government. Between 1989-90 and 1994-95 university funding rose by 23 per cent over and above inflation. I hope the vice-chancellors will recall that as they consider their future policy."

Vice-chancellors are threatening to introduce the signing-on fee from autumn 1997. They would shelve it if the Government cancelled the cuts to next

year's budget and agreed to overhaul the funding system, linking student contributions with a more flexible loans system. Professor Gareth Roberts, chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, said top research institutions were already considering their own levy on new undergraduates. "Doing nothing at all could mean some of the bigger universities would come in with more substantial fees," Professor Roberts, Vice-Chancellor at Sheffield University, said. "It is a way of sending a message to the world that our quality is being preserved."

Dr Michael Goldstein, director at Coventry, said: "If the Government does not do anything then I will have to take the recommendation of a registration fee to my governing body. It would be done with incredible reluctance but I do not want to see higher education go to the wall."

Sir Derek Roberts, provost of University College London, has proposed a £1,000-a-year tuition fee once a reformed student loan scheme is in place. The funding crisis will

be debated by the academic board next month.

Vice-chancellors at Luton, Teesside, Thames Valley and the University of East London yesterday refused to back the entrance fee. Sir Derek Fraser, Vice-Chancellor of Teesside, said: "We think it quite unreasonable to expect students who are already hard-pressed, and their families, to put their hand in their pockets for £300. This could just tip the balance. There could easily be a 10 per cent drop in student numbers on the basis of top-up fees."

Sir Graeme Davies, principal at Glasgow and former chief executive of the Higher Education Funding Council, said: "Our argument is with the Government, not with our students. Clearly there are certain steps we should take to apply pressure to the Government but I do not feel it is appropriate to export our problem to the student community."

Others said, however, that students should help to offset the budget cuts. Leslie Wagner, Vice-Chancellor at Leeds Metropolitan, said: "We should call it a deficit funding fee and we ought to tell the Government we will continue it until they change the funding system. Students are going to have to make a contribution and we should start that process now."

A number of vice-chancellors who oppose the fee will vote for them as a last resort, such as John Bunting at South and David Melville at Middlesex.

The college chiefs are united, however, in their desire for an overhaul of university funding and a halt to cuts and their desire to force the Government to reverse the Labour Party's plans for a 12,000-student civic university, facing cuts this year of at least £2 million, said: "We are genuinely at our wit's end as to what we can do to make the Government take notice."

Simon Jenkins, page 14



Anne Lodge is reunited with Sooty, the dog she found starving on a Greek beach

Mongrel in the east £2,000

By A STAFF REPORTER

A BUILDING society clerk in South Yorkshire spent six months in Greece looking for a stray dog to bring home after she found it on a beach.

Anne Lodge, 37, was on holiday when Sooty, a mongrel, wandered up while she was having a meal with two friends at a restaurant on the island of Kos. She said: "This scruffy dog was wandering between the tables looking for scraps. He was starving

again a horrible sight. He was filthy and covered in fleas. The other diners were shouting 'ah away' and we just took him out. I said: 'People are saying I'm crazy but I just couldn't just leave him on that beach.'"

Miss Lodge failed to find a home for the dog in Greece so she enlisted the help of Greek Animal Rescue to fly it to England. After a 2,000-mile trip via Athens, Heathrow and Manchester and scores of paperwork, Sooty

was brought to Oakhamway Kennels at Wakefield where it spent six months in quarantine. It has now settled at her Doncaster home and she is working overtime to pay off her debts.

She said: "It cost £1,800 for the quarantine, £150 for the flight, £150 to have my garden fenced and a kennel made and £50 in petrol to run over to the kennels to see him. I don't mind. He's worth every penny."

Parties plot similar course

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

THE three main political parties all see some form of student contribution as the only way to ensure the financial health of universities. But such is their nervousness about the middle-class vote that none has been prepared to say so.

If it does nothing else, the vice-chancellors' initiative may force the politicians out into the open.

Eric Forth, the Higher Education Minister, has already met the vice-chancellors in an attempt to persuade them that their long-term concerns are being addressed. There is no going back on the cuts an-

nounced in the Budget that prompted proposals for the levy, but the Government may bring forward a Green Paper holding out the prospect of new sources of revenue.

The Student Loans Bill, currently going through Parliament, gives no hint of a move to the sort of system the universities advocate. But the Government's higher education review, under way for more than a year, will take a longer-term view of funding.

The Conservative National Policy Group on Higher Education has said a voucher scheme should be included in the election manifesto. The

Green Paper may give a series of options, including tuition fees backed by income-contingent loans repaid over a longer period than at present.

The Labour MP Jeff Rooker was sacked as higher education spokesman in 1993 when he backed student fees. But policy proposals due this year are expected to favour the loan scheme pioneered in Australia, with students, employers and the State paying into a "learning bank".

The Liberal Democrat policy committee has approved a statement leaving open the possibility of top-up fees with income-contingent loans.

Clean-up of derelict land 'will lift nation's health'

By NICK NUTTALL AND IAN MURRAY

A £1 MILLION campaign to reclaim 270 square miles of derelict land was launched yesterday, with a psychologist claiming that the sites were already costing Britain millions of pounds through ill-health alone.

Speaking at the London launch of the government-backed Barclay SiteSavers, Dr David Lewis said that people living near sites were more likely to suffer from depression and ill-health through feelings of worthlessness. Those increased as the neglected land became the target of fly-tippers, drunks and drug pushers.

With no adequate recreational facilities, youngsters tended to drift into crime and vandalism. Giving people the means and the responsibility to turn eyesores into attractive open spaces created a community spirit and a pride "to fight back against the dereliction of run-down Britain", he said.

The three-year urban regeneration scheme is backed by the Department of the Environment and environmental

groups including Groundwork, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the Wildlife Trusts and the Scottish Conservation Projects. It is inviting bids from local communities to transform 66 neglected areas into green spaces and leisure facilities.

Although the initial amount of money is relatively small, the scheme has already attracted extra finance, while most of the manpower will be

provided by volunteers. The consequences of leaving land derelict were highlighted by a MORI poll conducted among 2,041 people over the age 15 for Barclays, the project's sponsors, to analyse perceptions of local communities.

It found that only 42 per cent felt a sense of belonging in their local area. Among people under 24, the figure was 23 per cent. Dr Lewis, a chartered psychologist, said that apathy in such areas resulted in a "cycle of personal and community failure".

Breaking this cycle through community involvement could generate a feeling of collective ownership. "There is no doubt that derelict land is having a significant impact. People acquire this notion of learnt helplessness. No matter what they do it will make no difference to their lives, so they feel like failures and just give up," said Dr Lewis, formerly of Sussex University.

He said there was good evidence linking derelict areas with ill-health. "One study found that patients who had undergone major surgery recovered faster looking out on green landscapes. Another study took people who had been artificially stressed and then showed them images of the countryside, a pedestrianised street and a bleak cityscape. Those who were shown the countryside relaxed more quickly."

Britain's total of derelict land is equal to an 200 times the City of London. Professor John Handley, of the University of Manchester, estimated that at present improvement rates it would take 200 years to reclaim the sites.

Bell ringing heralds neighbourly dispute

By BILL FROST

ENVIRONMENTAL health inspectors have been asked to investigate an increasingly acrimonious row between bell-ringers at a Kent church and parishioners who say they are suffering noise pollution.

Pearlys have rung out from All Saints' in Maidstone for 600 years. Local people are objecting to what they describe as the "unholy racket". The Rev Chris Morgan-Jones, the vicar of All Saints, admitted yesterday that his bell-ringers would sometimes practise for 3½ hours at a time. However, discordant peals were seldom heard.

"Suddenly it seems the bells are upsetting some local people who live more than 500 yards away," he said. "I live about the same distance from the church and it does not disturb me at all. We have done everything we can to quieten the bells, including sound-proofing the tower, but some people are not satisfied with the works carried out so far."

Maidstone Borough Council is to send 20 inspectors to monitor the volume and frequency of the alleged nuisance. They have the power to silence the bells.

In an attempt to mollify the critics Mr Morgan-Jones has cut the number of visiting campanologists. "They have been restricted to one Saturday a month and one evening a week. These visiting bands are keen to do full peals, which means they ring the bells in every possible combination: 5,040 rings, which takes 3½ hours."

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charged
over jet
incident

Defect's impact

Act of pollution

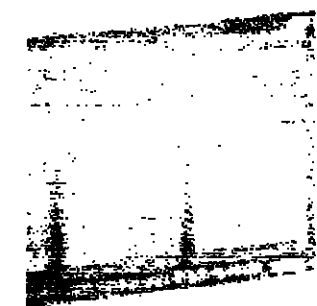
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Scargill dashes Labour hopes of effortless victory

By ALICE THOMSON, POLITICAL REPORTER

WINNING the by-election in Hemsworth tomorrow should have been effortless for the efficient new Labour Party.

The West Yorkshire constituency, with its derelict pits, boarded-up shops, unemployment, crack problems and long memories, could never bring itself to vote Tory. The Liberal Democrats are for vegetarians wimps, and in 1992 more than 29,000 people, from ex-miners to bank managers, voted Labour.

But new Labour reckoned without the return of Arthur Scargill and his new Socialist Labour Party. Mr Scargill may not have the mobile telephones or the slick suits, but he knows that the North has been sold out to those nambly southerners. He is determined that this election will prove he can supplant Tony Blair in the hearts and minds of the working class.

New Labour is equally convinced that it must crush Mr Scargill now on his home territory if it is to be free of him before the general election. As a result, more than 70 MPs and Labour spin-doctors have been driving through the snow from London, Tony Blair and his colleagues have climbed slag heaps, visited enterprise zones, patted stray dogs and attacked Mr Scargill with a ferocity that might alarm even Baroness Thatcher.

John Prescott, who was up

for his fourth visit yesterday to boost the Labour candidate, John Trickett, a veteran of Leeds City Council, managed a particularly grim sneer at the mention of Mr Scargill.

The deputy Labour leader spent his time away from the slanging match in Westminster on a visit to Havercroft Skills Centre. His charm paid off. In this village, on average only three people in each cul de sac have jobs.

Mr Prescott told the accountancy class that his cookery diploma had set him up for life, and he could now make perfect choux pastry. He joked with the advanced flower arranging class and tested the Spanish class's vocabulary. Geoffrey Manfield, the centre's organiser and ex-miner, said: "People here aren't scroungers. But there

aren't any jobs. Labour seems to have a new will and energy to tackle these problems. Arthur once did us proud, but he sold us out and Blair is our new hope."

Barnsley Road in South Kirkby houses both Labour parties in derelict shops with only the Studio One hair salon to separate them. The hairdresser has been persuaded to change sides so many times that she is now refusing to vote. While Mr Scargill was out on the red campaign bus yesterday, an American socialist with an orange beard was demanding to see reporters' union cards and muttering about right-wing media scum. "This is Jurassic Park, man, it's dinosaur land here. People have long memories," he said.

In the village of Ackworth yesterday, Mr Scargill's candidate, Brenda Nixon, was knocking on doors and giving an eloquent rendition of her party's philosophy between puffs of her cigarette, but was finding it hard going. Her true red socialist party promises a four-day working week, retirement at 55, nationalisation, and reopening the pits.

Michael Heseltine caused Mrs Nixon, a "retiring housewife", to join the fight against pit closures in the early 1990s. She repeats Mr Scargill's mantra that Mr Blair is like a rave vicar who takes over the parish and starts recommend-



WILSON SCREAMING KING ARTHUR AND 70s RETRO POLITICS

ing devil worship. "Don't let Arthur see me talking to you," Mrs Nixon said. Mr Scargill, rounding the corner, made it clear that he was doing so well he did not need publicity.

Lynn Bramwell, 29, said she would vote for them. "My father was a miner, my husband's been unemployed for six years, and new Labour sicken me with the way they dump us in dustbin schools, but send their own to toffs' places."

The Tories, thrilled by the sight of bullying autocratic old

Labour slugging it out with smooth-faced Mr Blair, have retired to a country house. Here Norman Hazell, the only genuine local candidate, uses the telephone to explain that he is an avid gardener. Even the UK Independence Party is making more effort with a leaflet saying: "We must re-establish the sanctity of human life and bring back the death penalty."

Mr Scargill says he will treat any votes for his fledgling party as a triumph. Labour is adamant that if he

does as badly as Screaming Lord Sutch the Scargillistas will be written off. But Mr Scargill said: "They were the same words used against Keir Hardie, one of the founding fathers of the Labour Party. Mr Blair should learn a bit more about history."

This is one by-election victory new Labour might want to forget.

1992 general election: Derek Enright (Lab) 29,942; Garnet Harrison (C) 7,867; Valerie Megson (Lib Dem) 4,459. Majority 22,075.

The Commons is in danger of losing its ballast

MPs should be paid much more. That has been true for a long time, but few MPs have said so publicly for fear of a hostile public reaction. But this reticence has now evaporated: last night, more than 230 MPs of all parties signed an early day motion sponsored by the good and the great of the Commons (Sir Terence Higgins, Alf Morris, Sir David Steel and leading Nationalists and Ulster Unionists), proposing that MPs' and ministers' pay should be referred to the Nolan committee, with a request for recommendations by the end of April.

Pay was the missing piece in the original Nolan inquiry. It was seen as outside the committee's terms of reference, a view shared by the Prime Minister. However, the Nolan report and the agonised subsequent debates have fuelled demands for pay to be re-examined. This is partly because many, mostly Tory, MPs face a loss of earnings as a result of the new rules restricting their outside interests and requiring greater disclosure of earnings.

In addition, 52 Tory MPs have said they will stand down at the next election. This is only slightly more than in the past and can be explained as much by the upheavals caused by boundary changes and the reluctance of some senior Tories to serve during a possible period of opposition as by the impact of Nolan itself. But these changes have focused attention on the problem of recruiting high quality MPs. Average real incomes have risen by more than four fifths since the mid-1960s, but the pay of a backbencher has been unchanged in real terms (despite a rise in allowances), while the real pay of ministers has fallen by more than half.

Several MPs aged under 60 have also decided to stand down and pursue careers in business, including Richard Needham and Steve Norris. They were followed yesterday by Tim Eggar, the Industry and Energy Minister, who is only 44. Mr Eggar is unusual in that he became

HIDDEN ON POLITICS

an MP young, nearly 17 years ago, and he has been a minister for more than a decade, without making the Cabinet. He has been thinking about a switch for some time and is young enough to have another full-time career. He says pay and Nolan were not crucial factors. His departure marks a further drop in the already depleted band of pro-Europeans.

Mr Eggar's decision is in many ways sensible, both for him personally and generally. It is undesirable for more than a handful of people to spend all their lives in full-time politics. His departure in his mid-40s for business is the mirror image of the welcome attempt by the parties to recruit more business people in their mid-40s to become candidates. More interchange is good, up to a point. The worry is that the balance is wrong. Too many good ex-ministers are retiring from the Commons at the election after they have left office rather than remaining as senior backbenchers. The Commons is in danger of losing its ballast of common sense and experience. Pay, currently £34,000 a year, is only one factor. But it is more important now after the Nolan changes.

The latest motion is intended to force the party leaders to commit themselves publicly. The issue will only be resolved if the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition agree a common line — accepting the recommendations of Nolan or the top salaries review body — and push it through together, whatever the populists on left and right say. It is a mark of how the Commons cannot resolve its own affairs that, despite last year's fuss, MPs are again willing to bring in Nolan as a neutral adviser. The signs last night were that the motion will not be ignored and may help to end the deadlock on pay.

PETER RIDDELL

Plea on women MPs

TESSA JOWELL calls today for new laws to ensure that political parties can apply positive discrimination to get more women into Parliament. Ms Jowell, Labour spokeswoman for women's issues, fears that the policy of seeking equal representation in Parlia-

ment within ten years will be jeopardised by the industrial tribunal ruling against women-only shortlists. Writing in *The Times*, she suggests amending the Sex Discrimination Act.

Tessa Jowell, page 14

Water industry 'fleecing customers'

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

TONY BLAIR demanded tough regulations for the privatised water industry yesterday and accused company bosses of "fleecing" customers with huge price rises.

The Labour leader said that the Government had failed to protect the public from a 40 per cent price rise since the industry's sell-off five years ago. At Question Time, Mr Blair asked John Major whether he was aware of the

"the sense of anger" among British people at the conduct of the privatised water companies. While prices and profits were rising, investment was falling, he said.

"Why do you defend each and every action of these water companies rather than standing up for the customers who are being fleeced?"

The Prime Minister argued that £15 billion had been invested in the water industry since privatisation. He also claimed that Labour front-benchers were benefiting from

the profits. The RMT union, which sponsors John Prescott and Frank Dobson, has invested in Thames Water and other privatised utilities.

Earlier Mr Dobson, the Shadow Environment Secretary, released figures showing that water companies were paying for a £294 million rise in delivery costs, up 13 per cent since 1991-2. "The major reason for this increased cost is that creamed-off dividends to the water companies' parent groups have increased by 36 per cent — £453 million — and

the cost has been passed on to customers," he said.

Later in a debate on the water industry, Labour said company bosses had used their monopoly position to drive up prices, profits and pay and perks for directors while cutting investment and wasting water.

Earlier yesterday South West Water denied that its managing director, Bill Fraser, 58, was leaving his £217,000-a-year job because of public criticism of the company's record.

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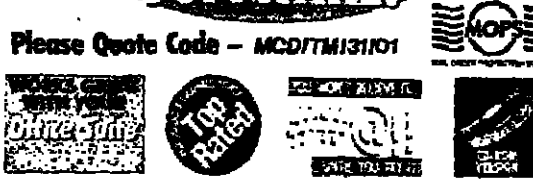
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EU tries to rescue single currency with pact on jobs

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

EFFORTS by Germany and France yesterday to inject life into their flagging economies will be followed, today with a proposal for a pan-European "confidence pact", a scheme by the European Commission to combat fear that monetary union will put more people out of work.

The plan, to be announced to the European Parliament by Jacques Santer, the Commission President, is expected to propose tax incentives, spending on public works and pacts among governments, employers and unions on the German model.

Turned to show determination with France and Germany, the scheme is aimed at countering the pessimism that has spread through Europe in recent weeks, slowing down consumption and putting pressure on the timetable for the launch of the single currency in 1999.

The German Cabinet approved an action programme yesterday to stimulate jobs and growth. Günter Rexrodt, the Economics Minister, said the "vitamin dose" for the economy would enable the Germans to meet the targets for EMU. France, which is thought highly unlikely to meet the strict EMU criteria, followed with a far milder package of measures to spur spending and the commercial property market.

In a shift in emphasis, German and other continental leaders have begun talking less of curbing deficits and more of tackling the notion that the EU is doomed to suffer a permanent agony of high unemployment. More than 15 million people are now jobless. Some are looking beyond the squabble over the EMU timetable to wonder how Europe can avert the

social crisis that would arise from losing the trading competition with Asia and the Americas. No government of experts have managed to explain how continental Europe can keep its generous welfare systems and compete with the outside world.

João de Deus Pinheiro, Commissioner for Development, brandished images from Orwell's 1984 yesterday to depict a possible future of misery. "We are running the risk of reaching the third millennium with an 'Orwellian' situation of having 'alphas' and 'betas', a society

6 We risk reaching the third millennium with a society divided between those who have and those who do not have a job?

divided between those who have and those who do not have a job," he said.

Italy, which holds the EU presidency, has made unemployment its top priority and most states want an employment chapter to be written into the revamped Maastricht treaty, to be negotiated over the next 18 months.

Jean-Luc Dehaene, Prime Minister of Euro-enthusiastic Belgium, changed tune this week and spoke about the danger that the race to meet the Maastricht limits on public deficits could lead to "competitive deflation".

Oskar Lafontaine, leader of the German Social Democrat-

ic Party, urged Bonn last weekend to realise that creating jobs was as important as monetary stability.

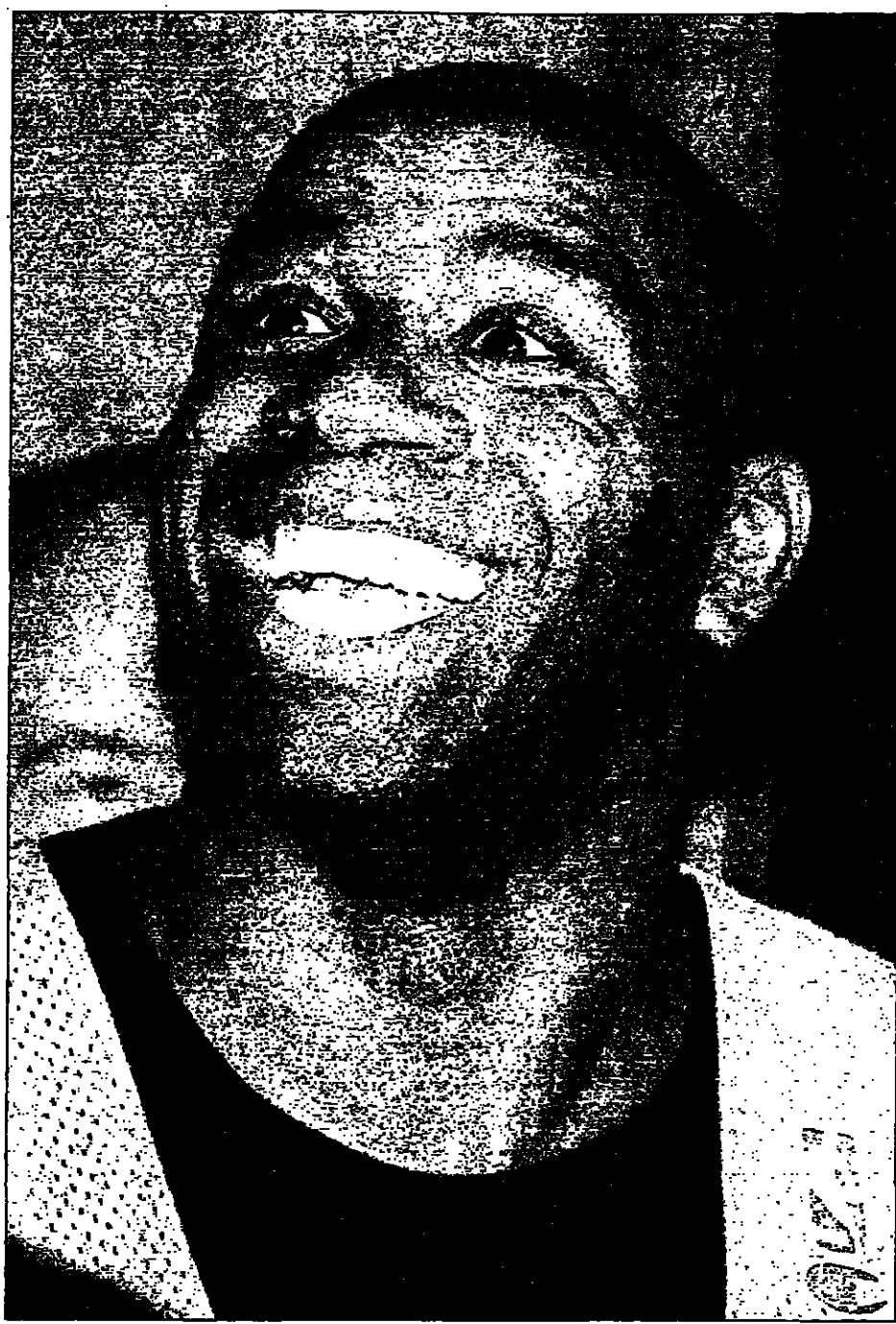
All these arguments give weight to the idea that the Maastricht criteria could be stretched a little to allow breathing space for would-be members. The continental leaders deny that they have any such intention. It is far too early, they say, to discuss changing the terms of a decision that does not have to be taken until March 1998.

The Commission and French and German leaders argue that EMU will create jobs rather than cause unemployment, as widely believed in France. However, many experts are predicting the opposite, at least in the short term, and Jacques Delors, the last Commission President, spoke last week against misleading the public.

European ministers are weary of lectures from John Major and his ministers on the need to dismantle the taxation and regulatory obstacles to efficiency, but the British arguments are registering on European opinion. The German and French media are drawing lessons from Britain, noting the beneficial effect there of very low employment costs but also making much of the "deteriorating quality of life" and the shrinking of the welfare state.

Mr Santer's plan is likely to emphasise the need for lightening the tax burden and cutting labour costs, but it will also push for orchestrating consensus among the "social partners", the corporatist approach that Britain shunned when it opted out of the social chapter at Maastricht.

Pennington, page 25
German view, page 27



A delighted Earvin "Magic" Johnson announcing he is returning to professional basketball with the Los Angeles Lakers this week, despite being HIV-positive

Basketball giant returns from battle with HIV

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES

FOUR-and-a-half years after announcing he was HIV-positive, Earvin "Magic" Johnson returned to professional basketball last night, saying he was "not worried about critics" who fear that the deadly virus might be transmitted in a game.

Supported by Aids experts who say such fears are unfounded, the towering showman who led the Los Angeles Lakers to five national titles in the 1980s signed a \$2.5 million (£1.6 million) contract on Monday to return as a reserve forward. Fans showed their approval by buying all remaining tickets to his comeback game within five hours.

The popular player announced a comeback in 1992, but cancelled it after the team doctor was criticised for treating him for a cut without rubber gloves. Fellow athletes

admitted they might think twice about tackling him.

This time most of the 300 lanky millionaires who make up the National Basketball Association, many of whom were teenagers who worshipped the "inspirational" "Magic" in his heyday, have welcomed him back. One young defender for the Indiana Pacers told *The New York Times* that any objections Johnson might hear would be from people who "haven't had their HIV education".

Sport has become a focus of Aids-related education since Johnson's retirement announcement and the admission by Greg Louganis, the Olympic diver, that he had allowed a doctor to treat a wound without disclosing he was HIV-positive.

Basketball players nowadays attend lectures by Aids

patients emphasising that the virus is transmitted almost exclusively by sexual contact and intravenous drug use.

Team doctors follow a policy of "universal precaution", based on the assumption that any player might be infected.

Vernon Maxwell, who plays for the Philadelphia 76ers, is still not convinced. "You get scratched on your hand and then he might get an open wound," he told the *Los Angeles Times* when rumours of the comeback began circulating last week. "I don't want to be there with that."

The usually good-natured Johnson shot back that Maxwell "has never cared about anyone but himself anyway".

Ticket sales for the Lakers are booming and Friday's game against the Chicago Bulls is being touted as the sporting event of the year.

Police 'showing du Pont favours'

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A LEADING lawyer has been hired to lead the defence "dream team" of John du Pont, the eccentric multimillionaire murder suspect who was arrested after a police siege at his mansion.

Mr du Pont, an heir to the du Pont pharmaceutical fortune, has engaged Richard Sprague, a former Philadelphia district attorney. With echoes of the O.J. Simpson case, Mr Sprague is expected to recruit a number of legal hot shots to assist him in the defence of Mr du Pont. Just as Mr Simpson's wealth allowed him to acquire the best advice, so Mr du Pont's \$50 million (£32 million) fortune may enable him to explore every avenue of legal procedure.

Listeners to a radio talk show in Mr du Pont's home state of Delaware have complained that his treatment so far has already been affected by his wealth. "People called in to say there is one law for the rich, another for the poor," said Allan Loudell, programme manager for Radio WILM. "His treatment during the siege was complicated by his 20-year relationship with the police, but there is certainly a feeling of aristocracy versus the rest of us."

Mr du Pont, a great-grandson of the 18th century gunpowder entrepreneur Eleuthère du Pont, has been charged with shooting dead Dave Schultz, an Olympic wrestler who lived on the 800-acre du Pont estate in Pennsylvania. During a 48-hour stand-off, police allowed the heavily armed Mr du Pont to take a night's sleep, having promised that they would not try to arrest him as he rested. They also gave him a telephone wake-up call the next morning. "That is certainly a new one to me," said Mr Loudell. Some callers to WILM speculated that had Mr du Pont not been a millionaire he would have been blown to smithereens by a police SWAT team.

Others argued that his past benefactions and his support for the police justified a sensitive handling of the case.

There was even a special reception for Mr du Pont when he arrived at Delaware County Jail, although it was one he could have done without. As he was led down a corridor, inmates chanted "Du Pont! Du Pont! Du Pont!", some beating their fists against their cell doors in acclaim. On account of the clamour, Mr du Pont, who claims to hear voices and is troubled by noises, was taken to an isolation unit. Patrick Meehan, the district attorney, denied that favouritism was being shown. It was simply "circumstances", he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Boy of 12 jailed for murder

Washington: A boy aged 12 became the youngest inmate at a high-security jail in America yesterday after he and a 13-year-old friend were convicted of murdering a boy of five (Tom Rhodes writes).

The two dangled and then dropped five-year-old Eric Morse to his death from the fourteenth floor of a building. Then aged ten and 11, the two became the first juveniles tried under a new state law in Illinois passed largely in response to their case—allowing the jail age to be lowered.

Bosnia chooses new leader

Sarajevo: Haris Silajdzic, who has been increasingly isolated from the ruling Democratic Rights Party, has been replaced as Bosnian Prime Minister by Hasan Muratovic, former UN Relations Minister.

Royalist march

Sydney: About 10,000 Australian monarchists marched here in a farewell to Sir Peter Sinclair, the outgoing Governor of New South Wales, and to protest over the downgrading of his post. (Reuter)

Dhaka alert

Security around the diplomatic enclave in Dhaka was tightened after shots were fired outside the official residence of Miriam McIntosh, the British Deputy High Commissioner. She was not hurt.

Miner killed

Johannesburg: A South African miner was killed and eight were missing after a rockburst 1.724 yards underground at a gold mine west of here, the Blyvooruitzicht Mining Company said. (Reuter)

Rebel contact

Jakarta: Rebels in Indonesia's Irian Jaya province holding 13 hostages, including four Britons, resumed radio contact with the army after five days, demanding that it launch no attack. (Reuter)

Wolves hunted

Tallinn: Licences are being issued for at least 300 of Estonia's population of about 800 wolves to be shot because the animals have been killing and maiming sheep, cattle and domestic pets. (AP)

Juppé's men vote to oust chief of news agency on scandal reports

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

GOVERNMENT moves to block the re-election of the chairman of Agence France Presse (AFP) have provoked a row over the independence of the international French news agency or lack of it.

AFP is partly dependent on government funds and five of the agency's 15 board members are representatives of the state or state-owned media.

The agency's current chairman, Lionel Fleury, allegedly incurred the wrath of Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, last year by providing detailed

coverage of stories damaging to the Government, including claims that M Juppé had rented a city-owned flat at a fraction of the going rate while Deputy Mayor of Paris.

On Monday, all eight board members representing the national and regional press voted to reappoint M Fleury, but the five state representatives abstained, thus in effect scuppering his candidacy which required at least 12 votes to pass.

On January 16, M Fleury

was given a severe dressing down by M Juppé, who accused him of showing insufficient discretion, as "required of an agency which is semi-dependent on the state," according to a report in the satirical weekly, *Le Canard Enchaîné*.

The newspaper said M Juppé was particularly piqued by AFP's coverage of the housing scandal and last month's crippling strike by transport and public-sector workers, which badly dented his popularity.

Faltering Dole urged to draft Powell as running mate

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON



Forbes: Campaign has eroded Dole support

TEN thousand Alaskan Republicans dealt another blow to Robert Dole's faltering presidential campaign yesterday, relegating the 72-year-old Senate leader to third place in a statewide straw poll. Party elders are being forced to contemplate what *The New York Times* has dubbed "the chaos scenario".

This envisages Steve Forbes, the free-spending publishing tycoon, destroying Mr Dole's credibility by restricting him to hair's-breadth victories and occasional defeats in the approaching primaries while remaining a thoroughly implausible nominee himself. None of the seven other Republican candidates has yet demonstrated any political sex

appeal. It is too late for new entrants. A *Newsweek* poll shows 42 per cent of Republican voters want a better choice, but their only chance of drafting a new face is if no existing candidate has acquired a majority of delegates before the Republicans' nominating convention in August.

The last time there was a "brokered" convention was in 1952 and the chances of a repeat in 1996 are very remote.

As Mr Forbes erodes Mr Dole's support, President Clinton's aides are also reconsidering their earlier assumption that the senator would have the nomination wrapped up within weeks. The Republicans "face a fascinating dilemma," Doug Sosnick, the White

House political director, told yesterday's *Washington Post*. Bob Dole may be too strong to remove, but not strong enough to prevail.

Another measure of Republican concern that the party will be lumped with a disastrously weak nominee is the renewed talk in Washington about General Colin Powell, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The retired general's mere appearance at a Republican fundraising dinner last week set tongues wagging, and many Republicans believe Mr Dole's only hope of defeating the Democratic incumbent this November is to persuade this hugely popular man to be his running mate. General

Powell insists he is not interested, but *Jane's Foreign Report* claims that Dole aides have been secretly offering him a deal under which he would not only be Mr Dole's Vice-President but also responsible for foreign and defence policy.

The Dole camp continues to insist Mr Forbes's bubble will soon burst, but that has not happened yet. On Monday, one poll showed Mr Forbes actually leading Mr Dole in New Hampshire, while the big Alaska straw poll gave the conservative commentator Pat Buchanan 33 per cent, Mr Forbes 31 per cent and Mr Dole just 17 per cent, despite endorsements from the state's top Republicans: Alan Keyes,

a black radio chat show host, came fourth with 10 per cent, pushing Phil Gramm, the Texas senator, into a dismal fifth place, with 9 per cent.

The results were heavily skewed by the fact that Mr Buchanan and Mr Forbes had campaigned in Alaska while Mr Dole only sent his wife, but the fact remains that barely one in six Republicans voted for their party's ostensible frontrunner.

A spokesman for Mr Forbes said the results were "a message that people just are not real excited about Robert Dole."

"It is kind of hard to motivate people to get out and vote for you when it is a kind of lukewarm, shaky support."

New York's striking janitors out in cold

BY QUENTIN LETTS

AS a strike by New York caretakers is about to enter its fifth week, the matter catching most public attention is the size of the salary paid to their union leader, Gus Bevona, who is paid more than \$412,000 (£273,000) a year.

Mr Bevona, an 18-stone tough with a booming voice and short temper, has said that he earns every penny he is paid as president of the Manhattan branch of the Service Employees' Union. "I do not see this same curiosity about the huge amounts earned by the real estate barons in this dispute," he said. "I get paid what I feel I am worth."

While his members are being paid \$7 a day in strike emergency money, Mr Bevona has continued to draw his daily wage of \$1,100-plus during the dispute. He called the strike on January 4 after a proposal by landlords to cut the starting pay of office cleaners, maintenance workers, lift operators and handymen, most of them immigrants. For the past four weeks, during dreadful weather, the workers have manned picket lines

outside the entrances to mid-Manhattan's smartest skyscrapers.

Mr Bevona, 55, has seldom joined them, preferring to supervise the increasingly ineffective strike from his marble-lined penthouse office on Sixth Avenue. He has run the union since 1981 and is known to brook little criticism. He reinforces his physical bulk (down by four stone from a few years ago) with verbal tirades at meetings and, when a union member protested about an increase in subscription rates in 1991, Mr Bevona hired a private detective to follow and investigate him.

Mr Bevona's absence from the picket lines and his failure to attend a workers' protest march on Monday have generated grumbles among members who envy his \$360,000 Long Island home, his two powerboats and his restaurant-going routine. It has also been reported that Mr Bevona's brother John and wife Elaine are union employees, on \$94,000 and \$39,000 respectively and the *Village Voice* magazine, normally supportive of

trade unions, has noted that Mr Bevona's father was in 1983 identified by federal investigators as a footsoldier for the Gambinos, one of Manhattan's Mafia families. There have also been accusations that some officials under Mr Bevona have "sold" jobs: taking money from immigrants in exchange for a promise that they will be found steady work. There is no proof that Mr Bevona knew of such practices.

Mr Bevona's supporters say his toughness pays off and point out that he has secured good deals in the past for his members. However, the strike is going badly. Few other unions have taken notice of the picket lines and the building owners have hired temporary replacement workers at a lower rate, demonstrating that the market can take a lower wage than the present \$29,000. Some of the temporary workers have made rude faces through the glass at the frozen strikers outside and during the recent snows the picket lines have made bedraggled, pathetic sights.

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Gulf shipping risk grows as Iran test-fires missile

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

IRAN has tested a new missile posing a direct threat to oil shipping in the Gulf, an American naval commander disclosed yesterday.

The Iranians test-fired the Chinese-made C-802 anti-ship missile on January 6 and are adapting a "significant number" of patrol boats so they can launch the missiles, Vice-Admiral Scott Redd, commander of the US Fifth Fleet which is based in the region, said.

The missiles are radar-guided, have a range of 60 miles, fly low to avoid detection, and are a significant improvement on the Chinese Silkworm missiles Iran used in the mid-1980s. They were "another dimension of the Iranian threat to shipping," Admiral Redd told reporters in Washington.

"Yes we can handle it, but the bottom line is, it's getting harder."

Iran has not had such a missile in its arsenal since 1988 when the Americans sank an Iranian frigate armed with Harpoon anti-ship missiles. In addition to the C-802, it has also bought two Soviet-made attack submarines and has built four sites near its Gulf coast for launching surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missiles.

In the 1980s America and its allies mounted a naval operation to protect the Gulf's vital oil shipping lanes during the Iran-Iraq war. The Americans now have about 35 military vessels in the Gulf including an aircraft carrier battle group, but nobody is yet suggesting a revival of that sort of operation.

President Clinton last year imposed a unilateral trade embargo against Iran, accusing it of developing a nuclear weapons programme, sponsoring terrorism and threatening the Middle East peace process. More recently Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, obtained White House agreement for a \$20 million (\$13 million) programme of covert action against Iran.

The Administration also acknowledged yesterday that 12 American navy cargo ships laden with tanks, armoured vehicles and other military hardware had been anchored near Bahrain.

The New York Times reported that the ships had been moved to the Gulf from their normal base of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean after Pentagon analysts concluded that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq could send five armoured divisions into Kuwait at just 12 hours' notice.

The ships carry enough equipment for a full marine division and an army brigade, but American officials denied seeing an added threat from Iraq in recent months. General Stephen Rippe, the senior US officer in Kuwait, called the Iraqi threat credible. However, he said the allies would crush the Iraqi military for good if it attempted to repeat the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"If Saddam Hussein does something that causes another conflict to start in the Gulf, we will ensure that when the smoke settles he no longer has the capability to threaten his neighbours," General Rippe said.

"We will not let Saddam Hussein roll into Kuwait City again. The US would not sit still and allow Iraq to threaten neighbours."

Fate of funds for tigers disputed

By ANDREW DRUMMOND IN BANGKOK AND LEYLA LINTON

BRITISH animal welfare charities were yesterday thrown into turmoil as leading "save the tiger" campaigners feuded over the fate of tens of thousands of pounds raised to sponsor tigers in Thailand.

At the centre of the row is Michael Day, founder of the Tiger Trust, a self-styled trouble-shooter who has been accused by a British animal welfare charity of failing to account for thousands of pounds raised through appeals to the general public.

Chris Jordan, director of Care For The Wild International, says he has records to prove that his organisation handed £250,000 to the trust to be spent on tiger welfare.

What is certain is that none of the tigers named in the "Sponsor a Tiger in Thailand" promotions as Max, Sheba, Khan, Casper and Kira received any aid from the sponsorship, although leaflets produced by Care for the Wild promised that £10 of every £15 would go directly to the animals.

An investigation by The Times shows that these tigers, whose real names are Top, Ten, Tess, Maliwan and Changlong, are in fact being cared for by both the Thai Government's Royal Forestry Department in a sanctuary known as Tiger Mountain 1, 60 miles south-west of Bangkok, and by a private businessman in a second sanctuary called Tiger Mountain 2, 50 miles east of Bangkok.

A spokesman for the Royal Thai Forestry Department confirmed that no money has been received from the "Adopt a Tiger" project run by Care for the Wild.

Mr Jordan said yesterday: "It has come to my attention that in spite of the £25,498.50 given to Mr Day, we are not aware of any contributions



Michael Day, founder of the Tiger Trust, denies that money given to him was intended for the upkeep of rescued tigers at two sanctuaries in Thailand

given towards the welfare of these tigers from this sum, or to tiger conservation in Thailand at all."

Mr Day said yesterday that he had received approximately £23,000 from Care for the Wild, but that this money had never been intended to pay for the upkeep of the tigers. He added that the Tiger Trust formally terminated any involvement with Care for the Wild's tiger adoption programme in October 1995.

"I can assure you I am not the villain in all this. It was never our obligation to give money to tigers in Thailand. We are a field operating group. We rely on other groups to raise money for us and this money goes towards, among other things, investigative work in countries which illegally consume tiger bone. It is cloak and dagger, James Bond stuff."

Mr Day said he also spent some of the money on political lobbying for the conservation of tigers. He added: "We have got an anti-poaching operation in the Russian Far East. It has been expensive, costing £250,000 over five years, but it has been a tremendous success."

Mr Day has threatened legal action against Mr Jordan, and Leonie Vejjajiva, Director of the Wild Animal Rescue Foundation in Bangkok, who first said that money from the sponsorship was not reaching Thailand.

Mr Day said: "Our accounts are on public record. Everything is recorded."

Mr Day, who runs the Tiger Trust from Chevington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, achieved some success several years ago in helping to expose the trade in tiger parts to Taiwan. He built the enclosure for Tiger Mountain 1, which he said was the limit of his responsibility for the project. He has also paid for some food refrigeration equipment.

Mr Jordan said that the sponsorship campaign was still continuing.



Jordan: handed over fund of £25,000

Princess Royal visits Falkland Islands

The Princess Royal began a five-day visit to the Falkland Islands yesterday, the first visit by a member of the Royal Family for five years (Michael Binyon writes).

The Princess toured Mount Pleasant and the headquarters of the British forces. Today she will visit a memorial hospital and attend a church service. She then has three days of visits to battlefield sites, schools, wildlife areas and Falklands families.

Her visit is intended to underline Britain's commitment to the Falklands at a time when relations with Argentina are improving and London and Buenos Aires are negotiating agreements on fishing and the oil reserves in the waters round the islands. The last royal visitor was the Duke of Edinburgh, who went to the islands in 1991.

In London, Guido Di Tella, the Argentine Foreign Minister, held talks yesterday with Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, on a proposed fishing agreement which both sides say is vital to set the profitable industry on a new, agreed basis.

Leading article, page 15

Samper 'took drugs money'

Bogotá: Jailed drug traffickers claimed yesterday that they delivered money in cardboard boxes to help Ernesto Samper, the Colombian President, to finance his 1994 election campaign (David Adams writes).

The claims were made in a "confession" to newspapers from a group who called themselves "The Extraditables". Senior Samper, who was cleared of any wrongdoing last December, says any alleged payments to his campaign by members of the so-called Cali cartel, took place "behind my back".

"We have not signed with our names and fingerprints, considering that everyone knows who we are," the authors of the confession said. In the letter they claim that they kept silent for fear of extradition to America, but are now ready to "help to save the country". Prison officials confirmed the letter was written by jailed Cali cartel members.

Hospital fees ruin Reeve

Washington: Christopher Reeve, the Superman star paralysed in an equestrian accident last year, is facing financial ruin for treatment of his injuries (Tom Rhodes writes).

Mr Reeve, 42, is trying to change national policy by altering the limits on medical insurance payments to victims of lifetime disability. His insurance, bought 20 years ago, is running out under the burden of hospital fees of \$400,000 (£267,000). The policy has a \$1.2 million lifetime limit, slightly more than the average \$1 million. He wants legislation to raise insurance limits to \$10 million.

Surgeon accused in Ethiopian Jews' row

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE crisis surrounding Israel's minority black Jewish community deepened yesterday when the Government announced legal proceedings against a leading heart surgeon who had said he would "do everything" to avoid operating on an Ethiopian Jew.

At the same time, a 24-hour bodyguard was given to Ephraim Sneh, the Health Minister, after death threats from militants over the destruction of Ethiopian Jews' blood donations.

Simmering discontent among the country's 60,000 Ethiopians, who claim racist discrimination, was increased when a leading surgeon, Danny Gur, told the daily *Maariv*: "I will have a very serious problem if an Ethiopian

patient comes to me for heart surgery."

"The Health Ministry will have to assure me 100 per cent that he is free from Aids, and this is not at all simple. I will do everything in order to avoid the surgery. I have no suicidal tendencies. I am not a Japanese Kamikaze."

The remarks were later repeated on one of Israel television's leading discussion programmes, prompting the Health Ministry to announce legal proceedings against him.

Mr Sneh, who earlier reported that the blood of Ethiopian Jews was 50 times more likely to be infected with Aids than that of other Israelis, claimed the surgeon's stand contradicted the Hippocratic Oath.

Greek troops on full alert as island dispute escalates

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

GREECE put its armed forces on full alert yesterday as tension mounted in a sovereignty dispute with Turkey over an Aegean island.

While a war of words heated up, Turkey vowed it would not put up with a foreign flag on "its soil". Greece, having accused Turkey of violating its air space and territorial waters, said it would do everything necessary to defend "its territory".

The row is over an uninhabited islet, about four miles off the Turkish coast. It is Imia to the Greeks and Kardak to the Turks.

The Greek Defence Minister, Gerasimos Arsenis, said Athens had lodged a formal protest with Ankara after "a Turkish frigate and a helicopter" had violated Greek territory. Turkey immediately denied the Greek claims. "The Turkish army is carrying out its normal daily activities in

air space and international waters in the Aegean," a military official said.

Tansu Ciller, the Turkish Prime Minister, accused Greece of staging a fait accompli over the islet's ownership. Turkey, which claims about a dozen Greek soldiers landed there on Monday, has called on Greece to negotiate over its future.

Earlier Mr Arsenis said the islet "is Greek and it is the duty of Greek armed forces to defend it and they are ready to do so". He added Turkey had naval vessels in the region and Greek forces, deployed from Evros in the north of the Aegean to the southeastern island of Castellorizo, "are in a state of complete readiness to counter such a menace to Greek territory". Naval reinforcements were also being sent.

Costas Simidis, the Greek Prime Minister, drew thunderous applause from parliament's 300 deputies yesterday when he said the Greek flag would continue to fly on Imia.

Earlier, Mrs Ciller vowed her country would not tolerate a foreign flag on its soil. She held an emergency summit meeting of military and security chiefs and Western ambassadors were called to a foreign ministry briefing.

The latest dispute is the worst for almost a decade between the traditionally hostile neighbours. The islet is one of dozens assigned to Greece under a post-Second World War accord. Turkey claims it under an accord with Italy, signed in 1932, which stated all Aegean islands within 18 kilometres of a coastline belonged to the nearest country.

The two countries, both Nato members, are also at odds over Cyprus and drilling rights in the Aegean.

Woman 'kills keeper of brothel'

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN WARSAW

POLICE in the Polish city of Szczecin have charged an 18-year-old Polish woman with the killing on January 5 of the manager of a Hamburg brothel and his associate, a German soldier on leave.

The double killing is understood to have happened after the two victims followed the woman, referred to by the authorities as "Angelika S", to Szczecin after her apparent escape from a life of enforced prostitution in Hamburg. According to a police spokesman, the two victims had met Angelika S on the day of the murder in a Szczecin suburb, where they tried to convince her to return to Germany. That night Angelika and a man friend, Zs, who has also been charged, allegedly killed their victims while they slept.

The bodies were found last weekend. Angelika and her suspected accomplice were caught and she was charged on Sunday. There have been several recent incidents of young Central and Eastern European women being drawn into forced prostitution in the West after answering advertisements for bar and restaurant work.

Tokyo rush to buy gun protection

FROM PAREGINE HODSON IN TOKYO

A SPATE of gun-related crimes in Tokyo has boosted demand for bulletproof vests. At Toa Security, a store specialising in personal safety items, sales of bulletproof vests have rocketed by several hundred per cent since the shooting in September 1994 of a manager of Sumitomo Bank in Nagoya.

"Until three years ago only people in special professions, such as security guards, bought bulletproof vests," a Toa spokesman said. "Now people from all walks of life—bankers, store managers, company directors and even hospital employees—are buying the protective gear."

At \$0,000 to \$20,000 yen (\$500 to £1,500) each, the bulletproof garments are not cheap, but some customers buy five to ten at a time.

Shigeo Maeno, the owner of a store in Tokyo which sells protective clothing, said most of his customers for bulletproof vests were people hit by the collapse of the bubble economy, particularly real-estate brokers and money lenders. He links the sales rise to an increase in violent crime.

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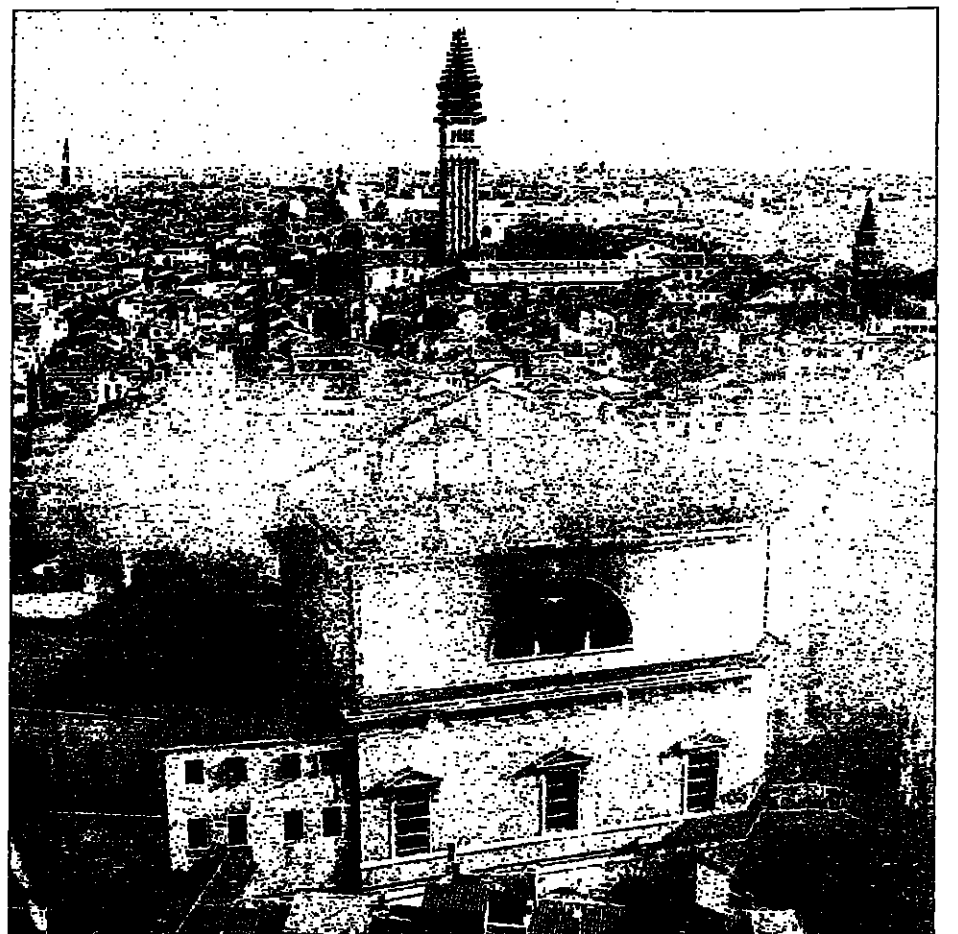
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For the third time, real-life tragedy strikes a jewel of opera



Flames devour the 18th-century La Fenice opera house in Venice on Monday night, left, and its smoke-blackened shell blighted the city's skyline yesterday, right

Venice 'without a soul' as fire engulfs La Fenice

THE "jewel of Italian opera", which has given a platform over the centuries to great composers and singers from Verdi to Pavarotti, yesterday lay a smouldering ruin. Offers to help to restore the 200-year-old La Fenice Opera House began to pour into Venice yesterday after the building was destroyed by fire late on Monday night.

The fire began in the upper storeys and swiftly took hold, sending the roof crashing into the boxes and stalls. The theatre, in a small piazza close to the Grand Canal, had been closed for renovation since August and the building was empty.

There were no reported injuries, but the flames swept unchecked through the 18th-century theatre, lighting up the night sky and reducing the ornate gold leaf and stucco interior to blackened rubble.

The elegant facade is intact, but the pillars and statues that adorn it are damaged by smoke and water. Behind the facade the ruined interior stands open to the sky, with firemen perched on ladders still hosing down the charred timbers.

"This is a terrible tragedy,"



Richard Owen reports from Venice as the city laments the destruction of the 200-year-old building which has been a shrine for opera lovers

said one shaken bystander, yesterday as we watched the smoke still drifting across the canals to the lagoon. For Venice? "For us all."

La Fenice (Italian for Phoenix) had been closed for repairs in the winter and was due to reopen in March with a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and a jazz concert by a band featuring Woody Allen on clarinet.

As investigators began sifting through the debris for clues, one theory to emerge was that an electrical fault had sparked the fire. Ironically, the renovation plans included new anti-fire protection systems and smoke alarms.

The tenor, Luciano Pavarotti, said that he was "devastated". "This really was the jewel of Italy," he said. Pavarotti, who had staged an opera at the Fenice as well as singing there many times, said that he hoped the "Phoenix"

would rise from the ashes once again.

The theatre acquired its name when it burnt down while being built in 1792, by the architect Antonio Selva. It burnt down again in 1836, but was rebuilt in an exact replica of the 18th-century original.

The Mayor of Venice, Massimo Cacciari, said the alert was given by a water-borne police patrol, which spotted smoke pouring from the roof. But firemen were hampered by lack of water in nearby canals, many of which had been drained for cleaning. Like much else in Venice, the fire brigade travels on water and there is a centuries-old tradition of fire barges.

Helicopters were used to drop both water and fire-retarding chemicals. But the blaze destroyed not only the fabric of the building but also much of its contents, including priceless scores, the opera's

archives and a portrait of Maria Callas. Houses near by had to be evacuated.

Italian newspapers were dominated yesterday by dramatic pictures of the burning theatre and of an obviously distressed Pavarotti.

La Stampa said that the tragedy recalled the fire at La Scala in Milan in 1943, and came at a time when Italian opera had much to celebrate. The hundredth anniversary of the premiere of Puccini's *La Bohème* is to be marked this week with a gala performance at the Opera House in Turin, where it was first staged.

La Stampa said that special anti-fire devices had been installed at the Milan and Turin opera houses and demanded to know whether similar measures had been taken in Venice.

La Fenice, which could seat 1,500 in five tiers, witnessed the premieres of Rossini's *Tancredi* and several Verdi operas, including *Rigoletto* and *La traviata*, as well as works by Donizetti and Bellini. Pavarotti said he had vivid memories of singing *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Fenice, and the theatre's demise left Venice like "a body without a soul".

In New York, the American Save Venice committee said that it would donate proceeds from its annual masked ball to the rebuilding fund, and hoped to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Giuseppe Cristofolini, a professor of restoration at Venice University, said rebuilding could cost as much as 500 billion lire (£200 million). Theatre officials said that the theatre company, which has been performing abroad during the renovations, would go ahead with its current tour of Poland in spite of the tragedy.

The Committee of the Venice in Peril Fund is opening a special fund for those wishing to contribute to the reconstruction of La Fenice.

Donations, marked La Fenice, should be sent to the Venice in Peril Fund, Morley House, 314-322 Regent Street, London W1R 5AB

Leading article, page 15



A drawing of the fire in 1836, which also destroyed the ornate interior of the 18th-century opera house

Pavarotti pledges concert to raise cash for rebuilding

By JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

INTERNATIONAL messages of support and pledges of aid, including the offer of a fund-raising concert by the tenor Luciano Pavarotti, poured in to help to restore the 18th-century landmark.

Massimo Cacciari, the Mayor of Venice, opened a bank account for donations to the reconstruction effort as Pavarotti pledged his help: "I will be very willing to do a concert, for free."

The Mayor confirmed that a new anti-incendiary system was to have been installed at the theatre in a few days.

The Italian Government yesterday allocated 18 million towards rebuilding the opera house and Lamberto Dini, the caretaker Prime Minister, called an emergency meeting of ministers to discuss ways of alleviating the tragedy.

Signor Dini lamented the painful fire in the La Fenice theatre in Venice. His office said that he had sent Antonio Paolucci, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, and the Under-Secretaries for Tourism and Civil Protection to Venice to decide what other measures were needed.

A city council project to find international sponsorship for restoration of Venetian museums is to give priority to La Fenice. The council is hoping for permission from Rome to raise loans on the international finance markets.

Carlo Fontana, the superin-

tendent of the La Scala opera house in Milan, said: "The very painful for us and all men of the theatre who have loved the place."

However, he added: "Venice will know how to restore this great treasure to Italy and the world. I, and all the artists and the management of La Scala are at your disposal for any initiative or support that you decide to ask of us."

Judith Aaron, executive director of the Carnegie Hall in New York, said: "For this to happen to a sister institution is

Rodney Milnes recalls La Fenice's glittering history, page 31

terrible, a terrible tragedy for the music world as a whole." It was too early to say if any help would be given.

Joseph Volpe, general manager of New York's Metropolitan Opera, said: "The loss of the beautiful and historic La Fenice is an immense catastrophe. We stand ready to help."

Massimo Nalesso, a bassoonist and a veteran of the Fenice orchestra for 25 years, said a visit to the shell of the opera house was "like going to a mortuary to identify a corpse".

In Brussels, the European Commission has offered 100,000 ecus (£32,000).

Drained canals thwarted fight by fire brigade

By RICHARD OWEN

IN A city built on water, there was not enough water to put out a fire. As you cross the little bridge that leads to the ruined La Fenice theatre, the first thing you notice is the tangle of fire hoses — so many are there that it is difficult to get through the little square beyond which the opera house dominates.

The second thing you notice as you round the corner is the drone of water pumps from the fire barges in a nearby canal, and the gush of water pouring down the inside walls of the white-painted 18th-century building.

But it is all too late. The "gem of Europe", as Venetians proudly call their opera theatre, is a smoking shell, its white facade smeared in black. The fire hoses, the barges and the red helicopters which now clatter ceaselessly overhead were not there at 9.15 on Monday night when the alarm was first raised.

Yesterday, as the clean-up operation began, so too did the inquest, with the fire brigade and the city authorities blaming each other for the fatal delay in responding to the fire. The fire at La Fenice has rapidly become a focus of national anguish, with news flashes on television and front-page treatment in every newspaper.

The chief of the Venice fire brigade, Alfio, said his men had difficulty approaching the theatre because of the narrowness of the streets; and two nearby canals had been drained for cleaning. Venice has no fire hydrants, and has for centuries relied instead on water pumped from its many canals for fire-fighting.

But the Government in Rome had to step in, with the Interior Ministry ordering reinforcements from the fire brigades in Vicenza and Padua.

Massimo Cacciari, the Mayor of Venice, was on the scene in the middle of the night to supervise evacuations from surrounding buildings. Venice depends on tourism for its living, and yesterday Signor Cacciari was putting a brave face on the disaster.

vowing to restore La Fenice as one of Venice's main attractions. But the fire is a further blow to the image of Venice, which suffers regularly from flooding and is sinking into the lagoon which surrounds it, despite the efforts of the Venice In Peril committees around the world founded in 1960 following floods that year.

Most of Venice's 170 *campi-nelli* (bell towers) are suffering from subsidence, and there is a continuing battle against air pollution, much of it from the industrial suburb of Mestre, which is eating away at Venice's many beautiful churches, palazzos and bridges.

Yesterday the golden emblem with the legend *Gran Teatro La Fenice* was still



intact on the front of the theatre, topped by a proud golden eagle. But beneath it the steps were littered with ash and charred fragments of wood, swimming in the belated water from the firemen's hoses. In the foyer, where uniformed doormen once bowed to Venetian ladies arriving in evening dress, there was a pile of sodden black timbers and reed upon reed of now useless fire hoses.

As a chill wind blew off the lagoon, disconsolate gondoliers tried to drum up custom from visitors huddled up against the Venetian winter. There were few takers.

But Signor Cacciari said Venice would recover even from this blow, and forecast that the visitors would return to the city on the sea.

Next to the burnt-out theatre, a poster bravely informed visitors that, although the opera company was currently in Warsaw performing Verdi's *Don Carlos*, it hoped to come back when and if the theatre was restored once again to its former glory.



Inside La Fenice during a concert last year. The fire started in the upper storeys, sending the roof crashing into the stalls and reducing the interior to rubble

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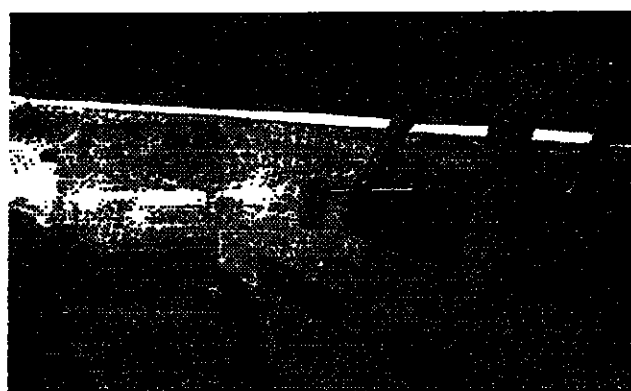
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Hot off the mac rack



TOP LEFT: Black cotton hipster skirt with hound's-tooth belt, £140; black V-neck fine knit cotton T-shirt, £75.
ABOVE LEFT: Cream rubberised cotton reefer raincoat, £385; white cable-knit polo shirt, £97.50; slim white cotton trousers, £115; silk hound's-tooth scarf (as belt), £85.
ABOVE RIGHT: Orange short cotton raincoat, £375; white short-sleeved cotton sweater, £69.50; lime green cotton trousers, £115.

Burberrys has added new flair to its traditionally cool British sophistication

THERE are few fashion labels which can claim an entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but that is where you will find Burberry (n. a kind of waterproof cloth, coat, etc. of this, made by a company of that name).

Burberrys has to be the quintessential British label. Founded in Basingstoke, and now based in the East End of London, it is still owned by GUS (Great Universal Stores), the British mail-order giant.

"We have been around for 140 years dressing everyone from kings and queens to Scott of the Antarctic," says John Suidale, the company's director of royalty and marketing, in an attempt to explain the label's successful traditional image. "We don't want to be a brand for fashion victims."

However, as fashion has turned its attention towards the sophisticated and sober, the latest Burberrys collection perfectly embraces the prevailing trends. There is lean tailoring, white cotton piqué and even a hipster skirt in matt black cotton jersey. Colour is everywhere — crisp cotton Capri pants come in paintbox brights, while cotton twinsets and cable-knit polo tops are awash with screaming hues — hot pink, turquoise, tangerine and red.

More conventional pieces which bridge the collections season after season, such as the short flared raincoat, are given a new lease of life when coloured citrus yellow and orange — this summer's hottest shades.

Black and white look particularly cool in plain knitted



ABOVE LEFT: Silver-grey single-breasted jacket, £325; matching slim trousers, £150.
TOP RIGHT: White cotton plqué single-breasted jacket, £325; matching skirt, £150; housecheck handbag, £145.

ABOVE RIGHT: Made-to-measure fine black and white puppytooth trouser suit. Women's made-to-measure suits range from £350 to £950, depending on fabric.

Photographs by KIM NOTT.

Make-up by Kim Jacob. Hair by James Dodds. Stylist: Charlotte Pilcher. All clothes available from Burberrys, 18-22 Haymarket, London SW1 and branches nationwide (inquiries 0171-930 3343).

Fashion
journalist of
the year



IAIN R. WEBB

separates which work overtime in a modern wardrobe, and sleek jackets, pencil skirts and narrow trousers.

In the past couple of years there has been a definite trend towards British brands, and the established and familiar names are displaying a new mood.

This season's collection appears right on target. It is modelled by the Scottish aristocrat Honor Fraser, who was discovered while doing work experience at *Vogue* magazine and is one of the new band of well-bred young ladies who are at the forefront of fashion modelling. Already a star of international catwalks (in Paris only last week she was working the haute couture shows alongside that other British beauty, Stella Tennant). A favourite with the top fashion photographer Steven Meisel, 22-year-old Honor, daughter of the late Simon Fraser, Master of Lovat, is the perfect choice. "We wanted a girl with a strong character," Mr Suidale says. Honor's upper-crust looks certainly provide a foil for the label's understated designs.

The Burberrys success story cannot be overstated. With 52 stores worldwide, two royal warrants and five Queen's Awards for export, the label is proving popular all around the globe. Even in Japan and America, whose home markets have been somewhat unsteady of late, Burberrys has seen its business increase. It is the leading clothing brand in Japan.

Mr Suidale points confidently to its merchandise. "We are a product-led company," he says. "Everything begins and ends with the product, and all the rest flows from there."

Business on the home front has seen a steady rise, too. Sales have increased by 20 per cent in the past six months. "Burberrys is for people who are looking for something classic, not the wild and weird. Our aim is to provide quality garments which will last over a long period of time, in both make and style."

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The man who survived five death camps

Nicholas Hammer tells Julia Llewellyn Smith why he decided to confront the terrible memories beneath his urbane exterior

His skin was stretched like paper over his bones, his body was alive with lice, he was so weak he could barely crawl. Miklós Hammer had just arrived in Dachau, his final destination in a year-long tour of some of the most terrible places in history: Auschwitz, Birkenau, Gross Rosen and Buchenwald.

They were the final, chaotic days of the Second World War. Hammer, a Hungarian Jew, was one of 5,000 prisoners rounded up at Buchenwald, packed 100 men to a cattle wagon. The journey lasted 20 days: 433 survived.

Hammer saw the men around him eat grass and then die of dysentery. The stench of decay was overpowering, the screams of those dying from hunger unforgettable.

But this was just the latest episode in a living nightmare. "There are other, more horrifying aspects, but I cannot tell you about them," says Hammer. "You simply could not imagine them."

Today Nicholas Hammer, as he is known, is a wealthy businessman who lives in a large flat in Mayfair. A small, chubby man with smooth skin and round, liquid eyes, he bears no visible trace of the torments he endured.

For 40 years, he told nobody about what he had seen. When he married his wife Sonja, in 1947, she had to ask the family doctor why her husband was screaming in his sleep every night. When his son asked why his father had a number tattooed on his forearm, he was told that this was the only way Daddy could remember his phone number.

"I was not giving anyone the details because all I wanted was to be a human being like any other," he says. "I had escaped to England; there were nice people, reasonably good food and I wanted just to be a grey person, to blend in. But I made up my mind that when this was less a part of my life I must sit down and bear witness to what has happened to me."

Ten years ago Hammer, then 65,

realised that time was running out for him to fulfil his duty to the millions who had died in the camps. He was put in touch with Gerald Jacobs, the literary editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, and for more than four years the two met regularly for Hammer to recount the minutest detail of his experience.

The result was *Sacred Games*, published last year to huge acclaim and which has just come out in

'I had escaped to England. There were nice people, but I made up my mind I must bear witness to what happened to me'

paperback. "When they read it, my friends were absolutely flabbergasted," says Hammer. "They had known me for 20 years and they knew nothing of this. As for me, when I was talking to Gerald I felt like a pregnant woman and when it was over I was only happy that the pain had gone and relieved that I had done what I set out to do."

Uncovering the memories had been a profoundly disturbing experience. As Hammer recalled the sensation of starving to death, he began to binge secretly at night. "My wife would find me in the kitchen packing my pockets full of food, she was absolutely despairing. I put on stones of weight and I cannot shake them off."

A passion for food is one of the more joyous legacies of Hammer's ordeal. While we are talking, the maid appears with a heaped tray of open sandwiches. "Eat, eat," he exhorts me, as I cram fistfuls into my mouth.

The son of a rabbi, Hammer was

born in Budapest in 1920 and became a student of medicine, with hopes of becoming a brain surgeon. That he ended up a textile exporter in London was thanks to a bizarre, chance encounter on the train to Dachau. An emaciated man crawled over to Hammer and — half delirious — began to talk. His name, he said, was Peter Howard, and he came from London.

At some point during the journey Howard died and his body was disposed of. Hammer, half dead, crawled off the train at Dachau to hear the familiar cry: "Jews to one side!" These men would be shot. When a guard appeared, listing names, Hammer looked up and said "Peter Howard".

"The guard passed and the next thing I heard was 'Are you feeling better, Mr Howard?' I just gasped in confusion." Hammer's face creases with happiness at the memory. It was two days later, the war was over and Hammer was in an Allied hospital.

Convinced all his family was dead, Hammer had grown to despise Hungary for the anti-Semitism it had harboured. Pretending to be Howard, he was repatriated to England, where he determined to make a new start.

In fact, his family had all miraculously survived, but still Hammer refused to return, opting instead for an emotional reunion at the Czech border.

The horrors are receding now and Hammer prefers not to spend time with other Holocaust survivors. "But I still have nightmares, even though they are rarer: one a year, when it used to be one a month and before that every night."

Despite his experiences, Hammer still believes in God. "I tell you why. My sister came back from Bergen Belsen; my father was taken away to be gassed and he was saved. My mother and my other sister were taken to the Danube to be machine-gunned and escaped. I lived, not because I was clever, but because I was lucky... I won the lottery of life."

● *Sacred Games*, Penguin, £5.99.



Nicholas Hammer is now a wealthy businessman living in Mayfair — but for years he kept secret the horrors of his wartime experiences

So what really goes on in Westminster's bars?

Billed as the Rover's Return meets *Panorama*, tomorrow sees the launch of Britain's first political soap opera. *Annie's Bar*, named after a dingy Commons drinking hole, is about a naive Tory bank clerk who stuns everyone when he triumphs in a by-election but then gets ensnared in the sleazy world of Westminster.

The new MP's wife anxiously chews her pearls at home while her husband chases blonde research assistants around Gothic turrets. Glowering whips pin him against the lavatories to teach him about party loyalty and, over crumpets in the tearooms, sacked Cabinet ministers whisper revenge in his ear.

But if in the real Hemsworth vote tomorrow the true-blue candidate achieves the miraculous and wins the first Tory by-election in seven years, should he take *Annie's Bar* as his bible of parliamentary procedure?

Probably not. A 12-hour tour by *The Times* around the most prestigious gentlemen's clubs on the banks of the Thames suggests that a guide to its other 23 refreshment holes would be more useful.

What the programme-makers obviously hadn't realised is that the real *Annie's Bar* is virtually redundant. A smoky room with greasy glasses, it used to be used by lobby journalists and MPs to exchange "ideas" until the early hours over Federation Special Ale.

But the swirl of intrigue now waits through Parliament's other hostilities (traditionally not subject to normal licensing laws because Westminster is a royal palace, leaving behind it a plotline and characters far more extraordinary than any scriptwriter could imagine).

Midday: We are at the no-frills *Strangers' Cafeteria*. The Commons secretaries are meeting for a back-to-basics lunch. Secretary is too meagre a word for most of these grandiose, tweedy figures. They, not Baroness Thatcher, are the real handbag carriers of British politics. Their elder stateswoman, Eileen Wright, has been in the House for 50

Alice Thomson discovers that of all the gin joints in all the world, Annie's Bar is the one our rulers are avoiding

years and has taught 25 Tory MPs how the system works as well as sewing up their ripped dressing gowns and rinsing out their swimming trunks.

1.30pm: At the Commons gym. The gym is open to all employees in the House for only £220 a year. One look at the average MP's girth and it is obvious that few of them take advantage of the machines. But the Tory MP Edwin Currie was there in her egg-coloured Lycra. She might have given our new MP a few tips about the steamier side of the House — based strictly on her novels.

4.00pm: The Barry Room, where the last peers are finishing lunch. This is the most beautiful restaurant in London, with medieval stone vaulting, pale blue upholstery and white tablecloths. The waiters know that it has to compete with White's and Patis, the peers' favourite clubs just over the park in St James's, so there is always steak and kidney pudding and treacle tart on the menu.

4.30pm: Past the kowtowing policemen to the Peers' Tearoom for Gentleman's Relish and crumpets. Here, surrounded by oak panelling and portraits of Debut's finest, is Lord Tebbit entertaining Chinese businessmen and elderly



Kenneth Clarke drinks up

baronesses and earls entertaining nieces and fishnet-clad granddaughters.

5.30pm: Down a winding staircase off the Commons Central Lobby to the brightly-lit Sports and Social Club, where the attendants to the Serjeant-at-Arms, dressed in black silk stockings and frockcoats, stand amid a sea of anoraks. Only Liberal Democrats and staff seem to be able to afford the £3 subscription. In return they get the one bar vaguely resembling the Rover's Return, with darts board, draught beer and Cornish pasties.

7pm: The Pugin Room, for MPs only and their invited guests. The Pugin has serious pretensions, with oft-high floral decorations, chandeliers, leather sofas and a spectacular

view over the Thames to Lord Archer's floodlit home. We entered just in front of Virginia and Peter Bottomley, who had come for a gentle gin and tonic. Former Chancellor Norman Lamont was celebrating having found a new seat at last. Gillian Shepherd, heroine of a dozen triumphant interviews chastising "the hypocritical" Harriet Harman, walked in to cheer.

8pm: Bellamy's Bar, on the first floor. A brand-new, characterless place that looks like an airport bar. It is packed with Commons research assistants eking out their average £10,000-a-year salaries, sipping cider and making jokes about their MPs' outside interests. But none of them will do more than hint at any financial or romantic shenanigans, being far more discreet than their masters.

9pm: The Members' Smoking Room, so secret that journalists aren't allowed in and so daunting that even Lady Thatcher avoided its cigar fumes. This is where one former Tory Chief Whip used to drink champagne at 10am and entice younger MPs to horse race around the room for bets.

11pm: The Strangers' Bar (better known as the Kremlin), open to most of the House and their guests, is heaving with MPs from all sides, drinking the House red and discussing everything from Ireland to the problems of getting babysitters.

11.30pm: The Press Bar. Dimly lit and at the frayed carpet end of the palace, this is where MPs and journalists gather to see the first editions of the papers and hear about a grandee plot or two over a pint of bitter — all strictly off the record.

One last check in *Annie's Bar* confirms that it has been quiet all night, although 11,000 people have been served in Westminster. The new Channel 4 soap seems to owe far more to literary licence than *realpolitik*. Its most credible factor may be that the whole series is being shot in a former Victorian lunatic asylum.

● *Annie's Bar* is on Channel 4 tomorrow at 9.30pm.

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The sound of the future?
How two teenage
twins invented the
computer program that
has revolutionised
classical music
Page 33

How to keep Pandora's box open

Tessa Jowell says all-women shortlists should be legalised

The House of Commons has a rifle range but no nursery, a barber but no hairdresser. Red tape still hangs on every Member's coat of arms, so that gentlemen can hang their swords. Since Nancy Astor made her maiden speech in 1919 pleading to "speak for women and children up and down the country" only 169 other women have taken their seats in the House of Commons compared with nearly 4,000 men. At the present rate it will take 200 years to achieve equal representation in Parliament.

In this league, Britain lurks near the bottom: 42 per cent of Members of Parliament in Sweden are women, 22 per cent in Austria, 24 per cent in Cuba, 25 per cent in the new South Africa, and 12 per cent in Indonesia and Cameroon. In Britain it is 9 per cent.

No one attempts to justify this. The Tories are sheepish, as well they should be, given the blatant institutionalised sex discrimination which clogs their selection processes. They are taking, wisely for once, little part in the debate which has followed Labour's loss of the industrial tribunal case brought by two men who complained that Labour's policy of women-only shortlists in 50 marginal or safe seats was a breach of (Labour's) Sex Discrimination Act of 1975.

Some gleeful commentators on the right have seen this as a snub and predictably decried that fine ends do not justify foul means. This will not do. The intention in 1975 was to exclude the internal organisation of political parties from the Act, precisely because of several important pro-women elements of existing party organisation. The exemption has allowed Labour to make great progress in equalising the gender balance of constituency and national party office-holders.

In 1992, Labour's party conference decided that grossly unequal gender representation in Parliament ought to be tackled head-on. We could not then, and cannot now, claim to be the party of equality and democracy while simply hoping that chance and events rather than decisive political action will bring fair representation.

The presence of women in Parliament, important as it is, is not an end in itself. Parliament is not as good as it should be at its job precisely because women are not properly represented in it. Its job is to represent the interests of its electors, and not just their short-term or narrowly perceived interests. This means understanding and really living the life of those we represent, because it is the experience of daily life which matters in policy which is to do with daily things: health, schools, work, insecurity, crimes. In these areas, which of course touch all citizens, the woman's perspective is real and different; and if that perspective is not sufficiently understood, bad policies ensue.

While most countries that have made progress on equal representation have done so

by using proportional voting systems, our first-past-the-post system does not allow for that flexibility. Labour, accordingly, in pursuit of parity representation within ten years, adopted an all-women shortlist policy, to be applied in half of our target winnable seats and in half the seats where a male MP was retiring. This meant that some 50 seats out of a total of 648 would select from all-women shortlists. The selections proceeded on local agreement in all but one constituency. It was "Deeds not Words", as the suffragettes begged, at last. Thirty-four first-rate women have been selected, and their presence after the next election will do more to transform our Parliament and modernise our democracy than a thousand speeches about the principle. A 6 per cent swing to Labour would see the election of another 30-50 women.

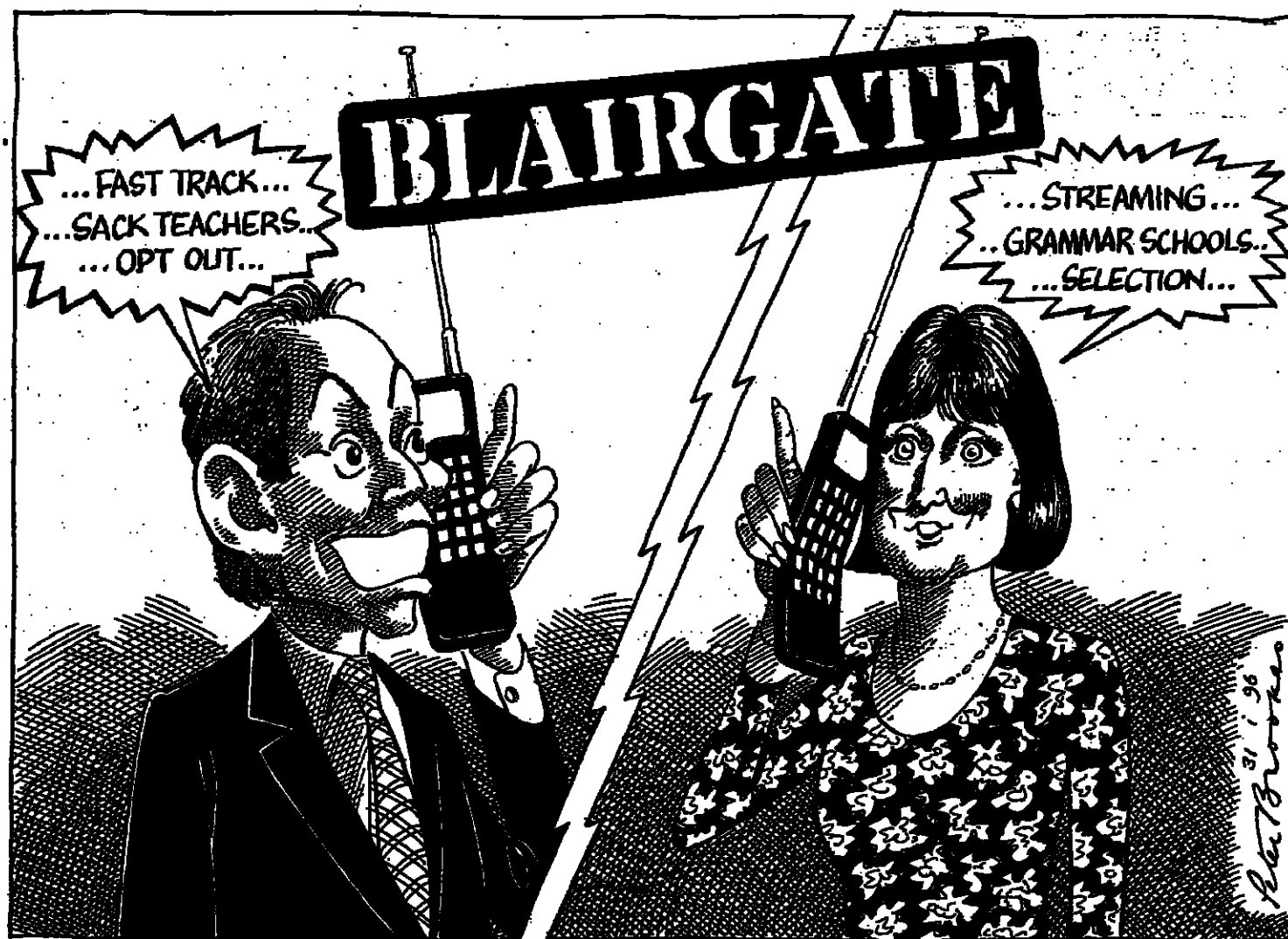
In 1992, when this policy of all-women shortlists in certain seats was adopted under the leadership of John Smith, QC, himself an eminent lawyer, the advice of another QC, now a High Court judge, was that there have been other decisions, and the tide appears to have left the policy stranded. Other means must accordingly be found to achieve the unfinished business.

The effect of the tribunal decision is that sex discrimination law is now a fact of the candidates' selection process, although this is not what the Labour Government intended when the Act was passed. Whether the existing law, which approaches this highly sensitive issue only by the back door, is really apt to achieve true gender equality in the selection of parliamentary candidates is doubtful.

The choice now is between taking the sex discrimination law out of the selection process within political parties, and permitting it to apply, possibly so as to provide that every shortlist must be balanced between men and women. Each list could be divided evenly between men and women, or it could reflect the balance of the sexes among applicants. As for positive discrimination, there remains a strong case for making an exception when it comes to the political process, since that process is not just another object of social policy, but is itself the agent of social change. We need to treat the horse differently from the cart.

The Conservative Party has obviously now decided that its best hope of avoiding electoral catastrophe is to brand Labour politicians hypocrites. The glib rests on the alleged gap between party policy and individual practice. As such it presupposes a moral dilemma. But in terms of commitment to women's representation, as in education, the Tory party machine has not yet acquired the moral qualifications to be part of the debate, and shows no signs of doing so.

The author is MP for Dulwich and Shadow Minister for Women.



Sensational tape with "plummy-voiced woman"

Dons must do or die

For students, £300 is a small price to pay for independent universities

On Friday, Britain's embattled universities must decide whether to defy the Government. They will debate an entry charge of £300 on all students whose parents earn more than £15,000 a year. If they introduce one, it will be the first breach in Britain's fee-free higher education system. If they do not, they will stand condemned as Government stooges, whingeing, wheedling and weak-kneed at the sound of battle.

Last November, university spending over the next three years was cut by 12 per cent in real terms, with capital cut by 52 per cent. The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, urged universities to get money from the private sector. That is precisely what they should do. They should charge the fee, each university deciding what the market will bear. They should make the middle classes pay. They should give them the shock, which is another way of making them expect value for money. What could be more Tory than that? But I bet if it happens, Whitehall will smell burning rubber as the Government does a budgetary U-turn.

Free higher education was, after mortgage tax relief, the greatest benefit paid by the British taxpayer to the rich. It is a tax-free cash handout worth up to £24,000 for every student. This bounty was introduced after the war only because Britain allowed so few school-leavers to go to university. The proportion doubled in the 1980s, partly thanks to comprehensive schools, and doubled again between 1990 and today. Twenty per cent of 18-year-olds are now on university courses, with almost 60 per cent still in education of some sort.

The cost has proved unsustainable. The system began creaking with the cuts of 1981. Decay continued with the "nationalisation" of the universities, polytechnics and technical colleges after the 1988 Education Act. Then, last November, higher education hit the wall of pain. Numbers are to be frozen into the next millennium, cost per student is to fall, and new building will all but cease.

This is true mimesis. In 1979, British universities were the one corner of the welfare state financed by *de facto* vouchers. They set out their wares and students chose, with a government grant automatically covering fees and maintenance. Money for research and buildings was channelled through the arm's-length University Grants Committee. In 1988, Margaret Thatcher and her

Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, swept all this away. Universities and polytechnics came under Government control. Within limits, each university was to be told how many students it should take and what research would be paid for.

Mr Baker was emphatic in his *dirigisme*. "The Government considers student demand alone to be an insufficient basis for the planning of higher education. A major determinant must also be the demands for highly qualified manpower, stimulated in part by the success of the Government's own economic and social policies."

This was Lenin talking. Mr Baker added that if graduate output was "not in line with the economy's needs, Government will consider... whether the planning framework should be adjusted". The voucher was sacrificed on the altar of planning. The policy was nodded through Cabinet by such scions of the market as Lawson, Howe and Ridley.

Never was the attribution to Margaret Thatcher of something called Thatcherism more absurd. She behaved towards the universities as a social egalitarian. She savaged academic independence, rammed the polytechnics and universities into a common, centralised funding regime and discarded all remnants of a demand-based voucher. The grants committee was supplanted by a fudge of initials—a UGC, a PCFC, an HFC, then an HEFC. Each minister wanted a new one of his own. Accountants were recruited as "academic quality assessors". They went round universities measuring the thickness of academic theses and counting scholastic references in bibliographies.

The reaction of the universities was to protest, then to roll over and allow their tummies to be tickled with money. After declaring in the 1980s that any change in the staff-student ratio would be a disaster, they increased that ratio by 50 per cent. After swearing that student numbers could not rise unless spending rose, they doubled numbers in five years while

spending stagnated. Always they grew, believing growth was the one sure route to money.

Most craven, the universities capitulated to the Government's prejudice in favour of science and engineering. There was no demand for this from either students or employers. Yet grants were biased towards expensive science subjects, so universities lowered admission standards and expanded numbers. There has been a wholly predictable rise in science graduate unemployment. At the last survey, barely half of such graduates were in science-related jobs.

Some might respond that universities are not about training for employment. They are what they are: they are always used to be, a quality consumer service. They offer scholars an environment in which to pursue knowledge and students an enjoyable experience and the promise of a more civilised life thereafter. Parents are offered status and three years free of worry about their children's employment.

This argument has always been anathema to the universities. To be a consumer service is to lie in the nation's accounts alongside Mickey Mouse and bingo. Universities want to be seen as a robust national investment. They want to show that they are more than effete academies of learning and good living. They want to prove themselves economically viable, the better to plead for cash from the Treasury and be relieved of the need to sell themselves competitively to students. "Britain needs more graduates" is treated as an axiom requiring no proof. Tables of dubious reliability are published showing that rich economies have more people in higher education than poor ones.

Few academics have dared question the conventional wisdom by pondering whether rising student numbers are a cause or a consequence of wealth. (Rich countries also spend more on holidays.) When James Murphy of Lancaster University did question the wisdom in 1993

he was hounded from pillar to post. He pointed out that there was little correlation between employment patterns and courses studied at university. In one survey of graduates, six years on, a quarter either were not earning at all (mostly women) or were in jobs where a degree was not required or not considered helpful. With rising graduate unemployment, this percentage is probably growing. As for international comparisons, they can prove anything. Germany and Japan's growth was fastest when they educated a small cohort at university. Now these countries are rich and are educating more, their growth is slowing.

If universities really want to be treated as so much investment infrastructure by the Treasury, they will find every course monitored and everything not to the manpower planner's liking regarded as wasteful. When the planners turn nasty, universities will be cut and cut again—as in November. They can kiss goodbye to independent scholarship and cede academic victory to the private universities of America.

The investment argument might have worked for the past two decades of expansion. Now it is threatening every autonomy that universities rightly hold dear. It was always stupid. A university education may be a sound private investment in future income stream. There may even be a case for subsidising the investment as a tax-free loan, as there is a welfare case for waiving fees for poor students. But there can be no case for using manpower planning to limit student numbers or decide which subjects should be studied. Nor is there any justification for those who can afford to pay part of the cost getting it scot free—a generosity that annoys foreigners. Students and their parents are the best judges of what university and what course is best for them, and should back that judgment with their money. These are market decisions, not government ones.

If universities are to reassert themselves as custodians of scholarship and academies of civilised learning, they must disentangle themselves from Mrs Shepherd's planners, auditors, inspectors and bureaucrats. They must rediscover the arm's-length principle and stop seeing Government as their client. They should declare £300 as cheap at the price. They might try £500, and tell the Government to get lost.

Simon Jenkins

Last Straw

AS JOHN MAJOR weighs into Tony Blair over his record on law and order, Labour Members are casting anxious glances at the party's chief superintendent—the Shadow Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

Straw is going deaf—profoundly so—and there is concern that it is affecting his parliamentary performance. The more raucous the Commons becomes in debate, the more it confuses Straw.

"I am stone deaf in one ear, after losing my hearing through a virus," he explains. "But I also have very bad tinnitus. Most of the time I manage but occasionally, if there is a hubbub in the chamber, I find it a problem."

The poor chap says that matters are not improving. "The tinnitus problem is getting worse. It's a continual hissing noise, rather like escaping steam. It makes for problems in determining where the insults come from," he says. "I happened recently to refer to the fact that I had been in the House for 17 years. Someone shouted 'too long', and I thought it came from my own benches. In fact it came from the Conservatives."

With the fragile peace in Ulster under evident strain, one of the Met Office's Belfast forecasters was severely reprimanded yesterday after an unfortunate slip on Monday. Promising continuing bitter winds, he had said: "It's time to bring out the balaclavas again."

In harmony

PROTESTERS were once again outside the Royal Opera House last night, complaining about redundancies. Last time the placards bore a simple message: "Turandot". This time, there was a Wagnerian theme with "Give-a-damning". But the *pièce de résistance* will come on February 20, when the creative effort will be doubled. In an unprecedented act of harmony, staff at the rival English National Opera are expected to come out in sympathy.

Wrong band

SCREECHING feedback ran through my headset after allegations that a radio ham taped a conversation between the Duke of



Edinburgh and a "horsey" female. The Radio Society of Great Britain is shoring itself, claiming that newspaper reports of the conversation have implicated its members. "There is no evidence whatsoever that the telephone conversation was intercepted and taped by a licensed radio amateur or 'radio ham'," barks a spokesman. Little wonder he's uppity. The society's patron is the Duke of Edinburgh.

Cats whisper

SIR ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER was a notable absentee during the first half of the historic performance of his musical *Cats* on Monday night, when it notched up a record as the longest-running musical either in the West End or on Broadway. Family affairs took priority over

the 6,141st performance. He turned up for the second half—but only after taking his son to Queens Park Rangers' FA Cup defeat by Chelsea. The composer is a Leyton Orient supporter himself, but the match was a big night for three-year-old Alastair: he was QPR's team mascot.

Scaled down

CECIL B. DEMILLE employed a cast of 125,000 for his classic film *Ben Hur*. A 1922 production in Drury Lane had chariots pulled by live horses. At the Warehouse Theatre in Croydon on Friday, the rattle Roman race will be re-enacted by a cast of four with the title role played by a woman.

"We are putting the 'her' back in *Ben Hur*," says Charlotte Palmer. "We have been very inventive and I can ensure you I won't be wearing a Charlton Heston toupee."

Staff losses

THE PRIME MINISTER is suffering from a touch of the Princess Dianas. The departures of his press secretary, Chris Meyer, and private secretary, Rod Lyne, are to be followed next month by that of Meyer's own flounderingly organised secretary, Tina Stowell. The linch-



Palmer: no hairpiece

pin of the entire shooting match, she is to become Sir David Frost's personal assistant.

Major can only reflect on an interview he conducted with Frost in New Zealand last year, when he spoke of Stowell and commented: "There's a great terror about Tina." Sir David likes to be scared a little.

● Mammom met God yesterday at the Mansion House in London, where the Lord Mayor threw a luncheon for President Zedillo of Mexico. Saying grace, the Lord

Mayor's personal chaplain blessed the food, and added: "May your pounds and pesos grow strong."

Dogs' peril

EARL SPENCER is clearly serious about settling in Cape Town. Not only is his stately home, Althorp Hall in Northamptonshire, already festooned in ghostly dust-sheets, but his gundogs, which used to have the run of the grand rooms, have been flown out to join the family in South Africa.

Fortunately for the beasts, they did not have to go into quarantine as they departed from these shores. But the earl must be aware that if he tires of his peregrinations and returns to the bracing Northamptonshire air, the baffled mutts will have to spend six months in quarantine on their return.

● It's not only the audience which has found Simon Callow's four-hour play, *Les Enfants du Paradis*, hard going at the Barbican in London. Members of the cast are apparently thoroughly fed up and have been begging him to cut it for weeks. Sadly to no avail—as was all too evident at last night's first performance.

P.H.S

Alan Coren



■ When Ursula waded in, Britain ceased to rule the waves

Today's exercise, class, threatens to be one even more fraught and testing than usual. Not only must it be undertaken with a daunting combination of honesty and frankness, but, ringed around as it is with all manner of private and public pitfalls, it will require us to select every word with singular care, lest misinterpretation follow and the seriousness of our purpose be terminally undermined. Because today, we are attempting to get to the bottom of Ursula Andress.

In this, we are, as you know, following where *Playboy* magazine is leading. You know this because you have read in every tabloid and heard on every nocturnal phone-in that *Playboy* has offered Miss Andress \$250,000 to take all her clothes off for its March edition, and that she is considering the offer seriously. It is the only way to consider it, since March is when Miss Andress celebrates her 60th birthday, which is why the tabloids and the airwaves are having such a field-day: for this is not merely major news, it is major debate. Anyone who cares deeply about anything wants a piece of this swishy, jam, postmen's-stagger, internets fuse. Yes, while the umpteen arguments over whether she should or shouldn't be hurled back and forth and the tense world trembles at the implications of her decision for women (and men) everywhere, the core of the matter—without which the debate is pointless—has so far gone unaddressed.

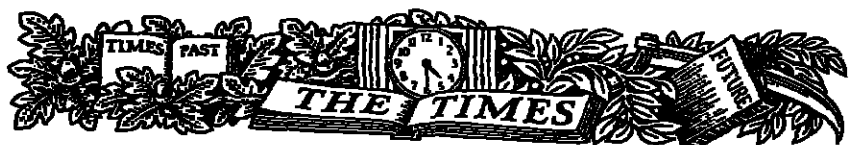
Which is: what was Ursula Andress? For if we do not understand what she was, not only can we not say what she is, we cannot even begin to guess what she might be in two months' time. And because there is a strong chance that even Miss Andress may not know what she was, I believe she should be told: it may help her to arrive at the right decision.

Ursula Andress was nothing less than the beginning of the end for England. Astonishing how little it took, isn't it? She wasn't famous even for 15 minutes, she was famous for only the 15 seconds required to wade out of the sea wearing a Bowie knife and carrying a large suggestive mollusc in either hand. That is the image we have of her, and think carefully now, that is the only image we have of her. It doesn't seem much to have reduced this great nation to its present tatters, does it, but there you are.

Up until *Dr No*, the British secret service screen hero—that is to say the figure who stood sentinel over all we had and held—wore thick tweeds, brown brogues, a belted trenchcoat and a trilby hat. He was called Bulldog or Sexton or Tiger and he invariably smoked a stubby briar pipe to enable him to enjoy the only good shag he would ever get. These chaps did have girlfriends, called Bunny or Tilly or Old Girl, but a pecked cheek was the top and bottom of it. Sex was only ever a weapon deployed by big foreign women to seduce the hero from his sacred duty of safeguarding the realm, and it was as effortlessly resisted as the Hun bullet or the Dago knife. It was what England was all about, and it was an example to us all. On observing it in Odeons throughout the land, young men who had been thinking of putting their hands on their girlfriends' knees instantly put them back in their Maltesers.

And then, in the spring of 1962, Ursula Andress waded ashore, a big foreign girl without any clothes on, closely observed, from behind a palm frond, by a British secret service hero. What would he do? Tap his pipe out on his brogue, run from cover, and, eyes gallantly askance, raise his trilby, prior to chucking his trenchcoat over her? You know the answer: not only did James Bond not wear or smoke any of these sturdy things, not only did he not refrain from sex with big foreign women, he instead took off the things he did wear and stubbed out the things he did smoke precisely in order to have sex with big foreign women. Sin had been brought into the world of the British secret agent. Give 007 half a chance and he was up the Tree of Knowledge like a rat up a drainpipe.

And look where England stands now, 35 years on. Who would doubt that it is all down to Ursula? Or that we would prefer, come March, not to be reminded of it?



THE NEW KUWAIT

Oil wealth in the Falklands must not bring new hostilities

The Princess Royal is in the Falkland Islands for a short visit, the first since the Duke of Edinburgh went there five years ago. Her visit — to British troops, battlefield sites, schools and Falkland families — is intended to reassure the islanders that Britain is still committed to their defence, their wellbeing and the protection of their sovereignty. The visit is well-timed. A flurry of activity between Britain and Argentina could be kindling in some dour islanders' suspicions that Britain is softening its position on their future.

A new oil agreement has been signed which clears the way to explore the waters around the islands. Guido Di Tella, the Argentine Foreign Minister and a regular visitor to Britain, yesterday had talks with Malcolm Rifkind on a proposed new fishing agreement. Trade between Britain and Argentina is booming. The Princess of Wales has just been given a warm welcome in Buenos Aires. And now there is talk of an official visit by President Menem to London.

Señor Menem has raised Falkland hackles by saying that his Government's new charm offensive — including the bizarre tourist visit by Señora Di Tella's daughter and her Swiss family to the islands — is leading, inevitably, to eventual Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas. Britain understands his domestic need to disguise its setting aside of the sovereignty question in order to attract the big oil explorers to the stormy southern Atlantic.

But the British Government, sensitive to the political as well as military minefields left by the 1982 invasion, is determined to do nothing to arouse renewed suspicions among the islanders. It has just sent out as Governor Richard Ralph, a discreet and tactful man, who has clear instructions to reassure all the Stanley councillors of the Government's transparency and good faith.

The islanders, however, may soon find that change is thrust upon them in a way that they had hardly expected.

All the indications are that the waters around the islands are immensely rich in oil. The field could possibly be one of the biggest in the southern hemisphere, and now that the political obstacles to exploration have been removed, the multinationals are ready to start drilling.

The Falklands could be the new Kuwait. The expected bonanza would yield riches on an immense scale — wealth that would overwhelm the 2,000 inhabitants and transform the bare, windswept islands and creeks with speculative activity. Thousands of oil workers would be attracted to the derricks. Prices would soar. The land would be denuded, as farmers forsook their holdings and abandoned their sheep. In a decade, the islanders could become a minority in their land, strangers in a transformed landscape.

The dangers are all too plain. Indeed the very success of the British recapture of the islands, the building of an all-weather airport and the Shackleton Report on the long-term development of the islands, have made the oil exploration all the more possible. Britain has some experience of the dislocations caused by oil discoveries: the Shetlands know all too well how a community can be transformed, and the Government is ready to offer advice on how development can be controlled and lifestyles preserved.

Nevertheless, the determination of Argentina to share in this boom, and its willingness, now at least, to set aside its obsession on sovereignty, means that the boom cannot be long in coming. This is no retrospective justification for the Falklands conflict — for either side. It is, instead, a challenge to London and to Buenos Aires to ensure that the prospect of wealth does not provoke new envy, new hostilities.

VENETIAN PHOENIX

Sine Ordine Cum Irregularitate — a jewel of art

The inferno that destroyed La Fenice on Monday night has devoured an opalescent jewel of the world of opera. For more than 200 years, the glowing "underwater light" of Proust's favourite theatre has drawn to Venice the finest talents, from Rossini, Bellini and Verdi, whose Traviata died here first (to critical abuse), to Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Britten. Venice was the city which, in 1637, added a new dimension to musical pleasure by being the first to build theatres for the public performance of opera. For Venetians and all those who love Venice this is a terrible wound.

What could be done, appears to have been done. The theatre was closed for restoration and repairs, including improved fireproofing and smoke alarms: as at Windsor Castle, an electrical fault related to repair work may have started the blaze. Even so, the fire was detected early, the alarm given; skilful tactical use of explosives limited damage to the foyer. But because the adjacent canals had been drained for much-needed dredging, fireboats could not reach the building. By the time water could be pumped from the Grand Canal and the Venetian lagoon into fire helicopters, the magnificent ceiling had collapsed into the interior.

Priceless scores and archives have been lost, and the auditorium and stage have been almost entirely destroyed. For Joan Sutherland, who made her Italian debut at La Fenice in the 1950s, this intimate late rococo hemicycle, with its painted panels and gilded intaglios softly illuminated by crystal candelabra, was simply "the most beautiful theatre in the world". Even its safety-curtain, a Venetian scene painted in the style of Carpaccio and only recently restored, was a work of art. But it is the Fenice's special pride to have been as attentive to the ear as to the eye: its acoustics were a diva's dream, so fine that they lifted the softest note up through its five blue and gold tiers of seductively decorated boxes.

The most ordinary performance here had

magic and La Fenice has been at the heart of some of opera's most glorious achievements. In common with every opera house in Italy, it has gone through periods of politically-linked scandal and fortissimo quarrels between managers, artistic directors and truculent unions. But in recent years, it has countered financial problems by keeping seat prices enviably low while staging fine all-round productions without "top" names. Audiences privileged to have seen the delightfully named Giusy Devinu half-millennium in pleasure at Cherubino's *Voi, che sapete* would find nothing to envy in the grandest international cast.

Italy has a chance now to surmount its bad reputation for allowing politics to impede the effective handling of disasters. This Venetian Phoenix is no stranger to controversy: Antonio Selva's original building of 1792 — called La Fenice because it replaced an opera house that had burnt down in another part of Venice — was the object of so much satirical abuse that the inscription on its facade, an acrostic epigram on *Societas*, was changed to read: *Sine Ordine Cum Irregularitate Exivit Theatrum Antonius Selva*. But the theatre has staying power, physically as well as artistically. Burnt to the ground in 1836, it was rebuilt in identical form within a year. Donizetti continued confidently to create new operas for its reopening and within a decade, it staged its first Verdi premiere.

Venice was not rich then and it is still less rich now. Although the citizens who rushed in tears to try to save it will give what they can, the city cannot conceivably raise the estimated £200 million that restoration will cost today. In Britain and America, Venice in Peril has been prompt to launch a special appeal. Galas will help; so would a tiny proportion of royalties from CD opera recordings. But La Fenice is as much a part of Venice as San Marco; and like San Marco, it belongs to us all. It must rise from its blackened nest — rebuilt, again, just as it was.

THE BROTHERS FINN

A British invention takes the microchip to Mozart

Do re mi fa, eureka! Two British inventors, Jonathan and Ben Finn, have dreamt up something which might one day do for music what the word-processor has done for language. As our arts editor writes on page 33 today, the brothers have devised a computer program which can notate, print and play a musical score at a pace even more rapid than Mozart at his most fecund. Wolfgang Amadeus, in fact, would be a mere musical tortoise in comparison: for Sibelius 7, as the Finns have called their program, is a sprightly hare of our microchip age.

Luddites will be alarmed of course, and the music world has more than its fair share of the breed: but this invention should, by rights, show hope not apprehension. Just as the microchip has made writing easier — whether poetry or prose — without polluting the essence of the art, it will surely come to free composers of music from the more tedious tasks that lie with their vocation.

Sibelius 7 will not itself compose music: that will remain the burden of the musician, and his or her joy. The program will, in a nutshell, help composers to fix their minds on the creation of music alone. "Input" the musical idea and the notations emerge as a "print-out". Imagine what wonders Bach

could have worked with such technology; or Richard Strauss, or Britten. Or the composer of *Finlandia* himself, from whom the program takes its name.

Not only will the Finns' invention assist in composition, it should revolutionise also the teaching and publishing of music. It is as yet too expensive for many schools to afford, but it should with time — and sponsorship — come to be more accessible. Music, whose recording is now of a sophistication commensurate with our age, still allows few roles in its teaching to technological aids: yet that state may not persist for long.

There are other, more sentimental, reasons for which to celebrate the brothers Finn. In this age of corporate research and development, lone inventors have a romantic appeal. And no society has a greater share of these individuals — motivated by nothing so much as the felicity of their own ideas — than our own.

Six months ago, we celebrated the invention of the clockwork radio, a simple idea which has taken news, music and educational instruction to remote parts of the African continent. Today we salute the Finns. Their "garden shed" has yielded up a device to which the music world should be indebted.

Pointing the way to an Irish peace

From Mr Chris Ryder

Sir, Both your letters of January 29 and 30 over-simplify Lloyd George's tactics in 1921. He initiated a truce in July that year and masterminded the subsequent negotiations with Irish Republic leaders. When they concluded in the following December he forced the negotiators to sign the resulting treaty or face the resumption of military action by the British forces in Ireland.

The resulting treaty, which fathered partition, sowed seeds of division and hatred in the new Free State, creating "civil war" political stances which flourish to this day. It compounded the Unionist siege mentality, nourished northern Catholic resentment at being excluded from a united Ireland, and abandoned Northern Ireland to the wasteland of virtually permanent majority rule. The most recent conflict was the inevitable result of the flawed 1921 process.

Unlike his predecessor, John Major has shown exceptional courage and vision in breaking away from the bounds of history and mapping out a forward-looking, self-determined future for Northern Ireland flowing from newly divined springs of reconciliation, tolerance and consent.

All shades of modern Irish political leaders should urgently drink from these new springs instead of continuing to imbibe the dregs of history. Then they could create a new political order in Northern Ireland based on the legitimacy of both the Unionist and Nationalist traditions and mutual respect between them.

Roll on the day when the Union Jack and Irish tricolour fly side by side over Parliament Buildings at Stormont. Then we will have true peace.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS RYDER,
79 Springfield Road,
Portavogie, Co Down,
January 30.

From Professor James P. Barber

Sir, In seeking a solution to the Northern Ireland impasse can a lesson be drawn from South Africa?

No two situations are the same. However, in the process of establishing a democracy in South Africa a dispute arose which is similar to that in Northern Ireland today — ie, whether constitutional decisions should be taken by an elected body or by an all-party conference.

The ANC favoured an elected body, because it knew it could command a majority, whereas the National Party and Inkatha favoured all-party talks because they had well established positions. Progress was made possible by compromise.

Initially all-party talks were held with a limited mandate — first to agree an interim (five-year) constitution, and second to agree a set of principles on which the final constitution would be based. The final constitution itself is to be agreed by the elected Parliament sitting as a constitutional assembly.

Using this experience, could progress be made in Northern Ireland — first by calling an all-party conference to agree interim measures and a set of political and constitutional principles, and second by recognising that the final agreement must be legitimised by a democratically elected body?

Yours faithfully,

JAMES BARBER (Master),
Hatfield College,
North Bailey, Durham.

Inter-faith centre

From the Reverend
Marcus Braybrooke

Sir, The International Interfaith Centre, which is being developed at Oxford, seems almost exactly to match Lord Habgood's suggestion (letter, January 29) for the millennium of an "inter-faith centre, where members of different faiths could meet and learn from each other on neutral ground".

The centre, the first of its kind in the world, will be a focus for interfaith work and research across the globe and will help to bring the spiritual and moral insights of the great faiths to bear on urgent contemporary issues, such as violence and extremism or threats to the environment.

Yours faithfully,
MARCUS BRAYBROOKE
(Trustee),
International Interfaith Centre,
2 Market Street, Oxford.

Family businesses

From Mr Colin Bailey

Sir, Mr and Mrs Alfred Forte, in running their Northumberland ice-cream parlour (letter, January 30), bring to mind the enormous sacrifices small business owners have to make in keeping customers happy and revenue coming in.

Vast numbers of people are employed by small family businesses working through the adversities of short holidays, illness and even family bereavements. Not for them the sick-note and DSS giro when they have a two-week flu — yet still they pay the full NI contributions.

Yours etc,
COLIN BAILEY,
The Hollows,
Coddanham Green, Suffolk,
January 30.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Provision of pensions in the future

From the Reverend Roy C. Allison

Sir, The report, *Pensions: 2000 and Beyond* (details, Business, January 24), accepts the need for an assured and adequate pension in old age. But by continuing to rely upon the Government as insurers of last resort, it maintains the illusion that government will always have the resources to make up what is lacking in personal provision to an acceptable standard of living. The history of Serps (state earnings related pension scheme) surely belies that hope.

Government's role should surely be to provide a safety net only for those with no other means of support. For everyone else the safety net of government provision needs to be transposed into a trampoline of personal endeavour by allowing individuals themselves to create their own pension scheme — having the tax advantages and choosing their own investments.

Why is it that tax benefits are allowable only for recognised pension plans through registered providers? The main beneficiaries are the insurance companies, who have not exactly covered themselves in glory through their selling of such plans.

Cannot there be any really radical thought given to pension planning?

Yours sincerely,
ROY C. ALLISON,
Coombe Cross Bungalow,
Ditisham, Dartmouth, Devon,
January 25.

From Wing Commander C. A. W. Reid, RAF (retd)

Sir, I accept that, as you reported on January 24, today's pensions cost £26 billion, rising to £42 billion in 2030, and that the burden will fall on a diminishing number of personal tax-payers. However, surely we can expect GNP to rise during the period and offset the problem.

An annual real growth rate of 1.4 per cent will be enough to increase the

tax revenues in line with pensions demand. This is less than the recent historical norm for even the shaky British economy, and much less than most politicians forecast.

The pensions decisions over the next years are more bound up with who benefits most from continuing growth. Do the diminishing number of people in work, whose individual productivity is hugely increased by the electronic revolution, take all?

The future of work is a major issue which is not being addressed by government, and the current pensions debate is but a sideshow to a much larger political contest.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER REID,
3 The Avenue, Charlton Kings,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire,
January 24.

From Mr Eric Reid

Sir, With an estimated 2.8 million people deriving their income in old age solely from a government pension, it is inevitable that those without additional pensions provision must remain on the edge of society for the remainder of their lives.

Widespread age discrimination in the jobs market, and a lack of any real job prospects for people as young as 40, have seriously curtailed the ability of many seniors to contribute to pension schemes which would otherwise enable them to avoid the retirement poverty trap.

For this reason, ARPOSO welcomes the second reading of David Winnick's Private Member's Bill on February 9, which seeks to proscribe age limits in job advertisements.

Yours faithfully,
ERIC REID (Vice-Chairman),
Association of Retired Persons
Over 50 (ARPOSO),
Greenoat House,
Francis Street, SW1,
January 24.

Feeding South Africa

From Mr Anthony Dykes

Sir, I would question R. W. Johnson's assumption in his report on plans for land redistribution in South Africa (January 22) that because that country is a net food exporter it "feeds its burgeoning population".

To be adequately fed, a population needs not only food availability but access to food by its poorest people, a condition not yet present in South Africa. A glance at just one indicator of human development — 68 deaths per 1,000 children under five (the UK equivalent is seven deaths per thousand) — shows that the capacity to produce or acquire food remains unevenly distributed. In rural areas, people need that capacity not just to maximise food production but because it represents their best chance of a job and an income.

The market-based approach to land reform, inspired by the World Bank, which some urge on South Africa, would require a financial contribution from the buyer as well as the offer of a grant and a loan and thus risks missing its target.

It could not only provoke land-price inflation and further accumulation by existing landowners but will fail to allocate land to those who need it most — female-headed rural households, for instance.

That prospect in itself should encourage the South African Government to stick to its convictions by introducing its own effective land reform.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY DYKES
(Head of Southern Africa team),
Christian Aid,
PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT,
January 23.

Drivers' eye tests

From Mr Roy S. Fox

Sir, The Minister of State for Road Safety defends the new Brussels requirements for those drivers who wear glasses or contact lenses (letter, January 29).

As these demands are largely based on the premise that glasses may fall off or contact lenses fall out at a crucial moment, and some 3,000 drivers are likely to lose their jobs in consequence of their implementation, will he (can he?) quote figures to show how many people lost their lives on British roads in 1994-95 as a direct result of the kind of mishap envisaged?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
ROY S. FOX,
Thatched Cottage, Old Church Road,
Lower Ufford, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

From Mr Paul Showman

Sir, If HGV drivers were required by law to wear spectacles with curl sides (as used by mountain climbers) their spectacles could not fall off. This would ensure that even if they had poor unaided vision they would always meet the required standard.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL SHOWMAN,
Showman Opticians,
114 Mauldeth Road,
Fallowfield, Manchester 14.

Duchess in distress

From Mrs Viki Royce

Sir, Like Libby Purves ("Give the Yorks a break", January 23) I too would like to voice my support for the Duchess of York.

Some four years ago whilst my daughter was being treated for leukaemia she was asked to present a copy to the Duchess at a fundraising event. This she did, and the Duchess, as one might expect, was chatty and charming. What was most unexpected was that some four to six weeks later my daughter received a personal, handwritten note from the Duchess inquiring after her health and wishing her a full recovery. It was an action that touched us deeply.

Yours sincerely,
VIKI ROYCE,
7 Arbrook Lane,
Claygate, Esher, Surrey.

Renal services review

From the Co-Chairmen of the
National Kidney Federation

Sir, Professor Netar Mallick asserts that his letter (January 26) on the renal services review will "reassure" kidney patients and their carers. It will not. The fact is that the quantity of renal care provided in Britain remains almost the worst in Europe, and that Professor Mallick's review, which we are told addresses this problem, has still not been published.

Professor Mallick asserts that the review "was internal to the Department of Health", in a letter of March 3, 1995, the then Health Minister, Tom Sackville, assured us of the department's "firm intention to publish this in good time to influence purchasers in the next contracting round". Our president, Lord Norrie, received a similar reply in writing in November.

It is now too late for the purchasing guidelines arising from the review to influence 1996 contracting. These delays cast doubt on the Department of Health's ability and, indeed, intention to take cognisance of the work supervised by Professor Mallick.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID POULTER,
F. HOWARTH, Co-Chairmen,
National Kidney Federation,
6 Stanley Street,
Workshop, Nottinghamshire.

From Mrs Hilda Kell

Sir, Why such silence about the Duchess of York from the charities she supports?

As a long-standing member of the Motor Neurone Disease Association I am aware of the work she does for us — quietly and shunning publicity. She visits patients diagnosed as having motor neurone disease as appropriate to their wishes. She sends gifts, she remembers people, and she goes down on her knees to talk to wheelchair users. She shows unaffected warmth and kindness.

Generous to a fault? Yes, but of all our many failings as human beings, how many of us would merit such a description?

Why are the charities not speaking up for her? Dare I suggest that they fear they have too much to lose if they reproach the Establishment?

Yours faithfully,
HILDA KELL,
14b Marina Court Avenue,
Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex,
January 25.

Heads you lose on theatre views

From Mr J. Anthony C. Martin

Sir, Obstructed views in the theatre, complained of by Judge Bishop (letter, January 27), may be overcome by the Glyndebourne method.

Seats in the centre of rows are staggered so that each person looks between the heads of those in the row in front: towards the side, the curve of the auditorium means that seats are placed immediately behind each other and members of the audience look diagonally towards the stage.

Until other theatres adopt the Glyndebourne layout, the St. Ilin Judge Bishop should book seats towards the side of the auditorium (or in the front row, where no doubt he will be obstructing the view of someone else — me, for example).

Yours shortly,
J. A. C. MARTIN
(St Ilin).

Flat 15,
Royal Victoria Patriotic Building,
Fitzhugh Grove, SW18,
January 28.

From Mr Bruce Summers, FRCS

Sir, Judge Bishop's ever-diminishing view of the stage is more likely to be due to his own receding height secondary to osteoporotic collapse of his vertebral column, rather than the rest of the theatregoing public getting bigger. A practical solution would be to buy the seat in front of him, as well as his own, and keep it empty.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE SUMMERS
(Consultant orthopaedic surgeon),
The Princess Royal Hospital,
Telford, Shropshire,
January 27.

From the Reverend Peter D. McGuire

Sir, Perhaps a partial solution to Judge Bishop's problem would be the adoption of European rather than British standards.

I (St Ilin and "broad") have just returned from a weekend in Prague which included visits to its three major theatres. These newly renovated houses provided clear views and very comfortable seating. As I found equally generous seating in hotel foyers and, dare one say it, in the hotel bathroom, I can only conclude that manufacturers there have been supplied with different mean measurements.

I have become an ardent European.

Yours sincerely,
PETER D. MCGUIRE,
9 Castle Hill, Eekington,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire,
January 27.

From Mr Robert Vincent

Sir, Judge Bishop is right to be concerned about the increasing number of taller people nowadays. The problem he experienced in the theatre needs to be addressed — by, among others, the makers of beds and motor-cars.

In the meantime he might consider using an inflatable cushion — but only if I'm not sitting behind him.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT VINCENT
(6ft, or 1.83m),
Dilly House,
Wildern, Andover, Hampshire,
January 27.

From Mrs Amanda Liddicoat

Sir, Judge Bishop seeks a reduced ticket price now that he finds himself nearer average male height and often has an obstructed view of the stage. Is he aware that half the audience have suffered from this problem ever since the theatres were built?

Yours faithfully,
AMANDA LIDDICOAT
(5ft 5in),
Thimble House, Butlers Close,
Lockerley, Romsey, Hampshire,
January 27.

Poetry in Gaelic

From Mrs Peter Winterborn

Sir, I feel I must take issue with the implication in your otherwise pleasing obituary (January 24) of Norman MacCaig, the Scottish poet, that Sorley Maclean was "tempted to experiment in Gaelic". Somhairle MacGilleain (his true name) was born in Raasay in 1911 at a time when Gaelic was the first language of the island people.

The late Professor Douglas Young, a classicist and an authority on Scottish literature, considered him to be "Britain's most excellent living poet" and Gaelic to be "a wonderfully copious and subtle medium for high poetry". I, and many others, agree.

Yours faithfully,
M. C. WINTERBORN,
4 Hill Street, Strathmiglo, Fife,
January 24.

Standing for gallantry

From Mr Brian Calwell

Sir, I stand, so to speak, to be corrected by Mr Hide (letter, January 26) or by others, but was it not G. K. Chesterton, the other half of Chesterton, who gallantly surrendered his seat to three ladies when travelling on what he once dubbed a "red chariot of democracy"?

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN CALWELL,
5 Essex Court, Middle Temple, ECA,
January 26.

OBITUARIES

MARCIA DAVENPORT

Marcia Davenport, novelist and biographer, died in Monterey, California, on January 16 aged 92. She was born in New York City on June 9, 1903.

MARCIA DAVENPORT always read and wrote the last line of any book first. This was because her soprano mother, while supervising endless early piano practice, would never allow her to learn the rest of a musical piece until the last phrase was perfect. "Whatever it is you do, the last impression is what people remember," she said. "Begin well with attack and accuracy. Drive it through. But, whatever else, make the end the best. Know exactly what you are aiming for and finish with a bang."

With the collapse of communism, and in particular with Vaclav Havel's "velvet revolution" of December 1989, Marcia Davenport's last years were rewarded in a way that even she could not have foreseen. Her biography *Mozart*, originally published in 1932 and continuously in print ever since, ensured that she would always have personal recognition; but to be able to witness in the bicentenary year of Mozart's death a 1991 production of *Don Giovanni* in Prague — the city where 60 years before she had done her research — was a reward for which even she in the dark years had scarcely dared to hope.

But Mozart was not her only claim to fame. Her world bestseller *The Valley of Decision*, the story of the growth of the steel industry set in Pittsburgh, during the years 1873-1941, was first published in 1942. It included vivid portraits of Czech and Slovak immigrant workers and it was not surprising that, after being translated into 11 other languages, the Czech edition of 1947 — the year before the Communist takeover — was a huge success (a year later it was banned). Marcia Davenport lived to see it on sale again during "the Prague spring" of 1968, only to watch it once more officially blacklisted (this time with the plates destroyed). But she had the last laugh — in 1990 supervising an entirely new Czech translation and living to see it become a commercial success.

Her autobiography *Too Strong for Fantasy* (1967) is often said to be the last book she wrote. The Czechs, however, know otherwise. In 1990 *Jan Masaryk: Posledni Portret* (A Last Portrait) appeared on the streets of Prague with an initial print run of 100,000 copies. Its author, combining five later chapters with one written earlier, had managed to give back to the Czech people a piece of their history which she knew all too well and which had been denied to them. Throughout the October of 1990 she was back in Prague, her visit coinciding with the opening of a Jan Masaryk exhibition. The United States Ambassador, Shirley Temple Black, noted she was the first to sign the exhibition's guestbook: "She just wrote her name, 'Marcia Davenport', and beside it the one word, 'Returned'."

A passionate supporter of the prewar Czech Republic, Davenport in 1939 had broadcast from New York in Czech,



parroting the translation of her written words until she learnt to speak the language. Jan Masaryk, the Czech Minister to the Court of St James, would send her information from London by whatever safe diplomatic means he could devise. She was to meet the man who eventually became her lover for the first time in New York in November 1941, two weeks before Pearl Harbor and four months after the full British recognition of the Beneš-Masaryk Provisional Government-in-Exile.

Masaryk himself broadcast weekly from London throughout the war. Although not the most impartial of witnesses, Davenport was in no doubt as to the effect he had: "The Czechs and the Slovaks listened to him clandestinely on pain of death, on secret and often home-made receivers called bed-spring radios." After the war, and with the restoration of the Czech Republic, she would by official invitation return to Prague to live.

But it was while in London that Davenport, in 1948, heard the news that since the Communist takeover of the Prague Government in February

she had begun to dread. According to the account given by Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart in his 1952 book *My Europe*: "... I was in my club in London and before half-past ten I was called to the telephone at once. A voice from the *Evening Standard* said: 'Can you tell us something about Jan Masaryk?' 'Why?' I asked tremulously. 'What has happened?' Back came the answer. 'He has committed suicide.' We were found dead outside the Czernin Palace at 6.30 this morning.' With a heavy heart I went to Claridge's to see Marcia Davenport... Jan, she said, had sent her to England with instructions to see me first and to ask me to help her see Sir Orme Sargent [Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office]. Jan was going to escape. He wanted us to think well of him. She broke down. 'What is the use of messages now?' she sobbed, and tears filled my own eyes. I stayed with her for two hours and she told me all she knew. Jan had sent her to England on Sunday March 7... he would escape later at some international conference." (They had planned to marry.)

In addition to Masaryk and her

mother, Davenport had two other driving forces in her life: Arturo Toscanini, the Italian conductor, and Maxwell Perkins, the American publisher. She said that in early life music had formed "deep grooves" in her brain, so that she not only had perfect pitch; she also had perfect recall of any piece she ever heard. Through her mother Alma Gluck she had known Toscanini since she was six. On one occasion she had even listened to him conduct a performance, sitting on a pile of coats so that she could see him as well, from her mother's special box at the old New York Met. From 1927 until 1954 she attended not merely every Toscanini concert but, when humanly possible, each rehearsal for every concert as well (which in 1936 included no fewer than sixty rehearsals for *Die Meistersinger* in Salzburg). In the 1930s she wrote and delivered the Met Opera's intermission radio broadcast talks; she also wrote music reviews but never wrote about anything of which she had not read the score beforehand.

Toscanini would frequently call her in the small hours. She would sing down the telephone anything he asked for — once convincing him to use Mozart's Bassoon Concerto in a concert because it was her favourite instrument. The date of Jan Masaryk's death was March 10, 1948. Every year until he died in 1957, without request or explanation, Toscanini would play Smetana's tone poem *Vltava* at whatever concert came closest to the anniversary.

Max Perkins was an almost equal influence. At the publishing house of Scribner's he acted as editor for the company's most important authors such as Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald and Thomas Wolfe. From the moment Marcia Davenport walked into his office with the prospectus of her book on Mozart, he resolved that he would edit her, too. He read her outline from back to front, which pleased her. All he said was: "Go ahead and write it. We will publish it."

Davenport had begun writing on the infant New Yorker, gleaming material for E. B. White and James Thurber. Besides *The Valley of Decision* (1942), her other novels included *Of Lena Gayer* (1936), *East Side, West Side* (1947), *My Brother's Keeper* (1954) and *The Constant Image* (1960).

Davenport's mother, Alma Fiersohn, had arrived in New York from Romania aged six. She married Bernard Gluck in 1906 and was later married to the violinist Efrem Zimbalist. Her daughter was briefly married to Frank D. Clarke and then in 1929 to Russell Whipple Davenport, poet and managing editor of *Fortune*.

They had what she termed "a working partnership marriage" — a phrase that was not understood by many people. He believed in, and encouraged, her writing efforts but was content to be without his wife for long periods. The marriage was, as she was to say later, "an elastic band that stretched and stretched until there was no elastic left". They were divorced in 1947.

She is survived by a daughter from her second marriage.

TERENCE REESE



Terence Reese, right, with his former bridge partner Boris Schapiro, in 1981

Terence Reese, bridge player, died on January 28 aged 82. He was born on August 28, 1913.

A HIGHLY celebrated figure in the world of bridge, Terence Reese was considered not only one of the finest players in the history of the game but also generally acknowledged as the most outstanding writer on the subject.

He won the first of many titles as a member of the victorious British team in the 1948 European championships, a triumph he was to repeat on three later occasions. He was Bermuda Bowl champion (the world's top event) in 1955, World Pairs champion in 1962 and World Cup champion in 1961. He also won the Gold Cup (Britain's senior challenge) eight times and the Master Pairs seven times.

His partnership with Boris Schapiro (now the bridge correspondent of *The Sunday Times*) became truly legendary, in part because of what happened at the 1964 Bermuda Bowl in Buenos Aires. The pair were accused of cheating by conveying information about the heart suit through finger signals. They were convicted by the World Bridge Federation, and later acquitted after a more exhaustive investigation by a special inquiry set up by the British Bridge League. The whole protracted affair was the card

playing world's equivalent of Bodilyme. Neither player again took part in international team competition, to Britain's undoubted loss.

Several experts dismissed the charges on the ground that they were absurd: Reese was far too good a player to need to cheat. But the Buenos Aires incident led to recrimination and litigation on an epic scale. Reese himself wrote about it in *Story of an Accusation*.

John Terence Reese played his first tournament at the age of 14. He was a top classical scholar at Bradfield College and then at New College, Oxford, after which, somewhat unusually, he went to work for two years in Harrods.

It may have been during a lull on the counters there that Reese decided to start writing about — as well as playing about — in 1938 he published his first book, *Reese on Play and Play Bridge* with Rees — are recognised as classics, as are the several titles in the Master Bridge Series, co-authored with Roger Trézel in the 1970s and 1980s.

Reese was also a highly regarded bridge columnist, notably in *The Observer* and the *Evening Standard*. In the latter he pulled off the always

difficult trick of illuminating points of great subtlety with astonishing succinctness.

The criticism was sometimes voiced that a man with such a fine mind should not have devoted his whole life to a card game. But, most creditably, this former classical scholar discovered many of the arithmetical inescapabilities contained within the finite world of 52 playing cards.

Some of the concepts Reese identified and named — the "vice", the "winkle", the "principle of restricted choice" — are today common parlance among rubber bridge players. "Terence says..." has been the final arbiter of many a domestic bridge dispute.

Reese was both witty and sharp. He wrote of himself: "One often hears a player say, almost as a boast, 'I've never read a book on bridge'. I always answer agreeably: 'I can see.' Partnering him required strong nerves and a thick skin."

In later life increasing deafness made the bridge table an uncomfortable arena for Reese, but he remained a keen golfer and backgammon player, and even wrote a book about the latter. He was also a lifelong supporter of Queens Park Rangers football team, whom he always referred to as "our boys".

Terence Reese is survived by his wife Alwyn, whom he married in 1970.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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OLGA HAVLOVA

Olga Havlova, political activist and wife of President Václav Havel, died in Prague on January 27 aged 62. She was born in the same city on July 11, 1933.

OLGA HAVLOVA grew up in the Prague working-class district of Zizkov, where she had a very hard childhood. Her parents divorced when she was six and from the age of 15 she took care not only of herself but of the five children of her older sister as well.

She began work at the Bata shoe factory and later earned her living as a clerk, stock-keeper and cashier. She first met the younger and much more middle-class Václav Havel in 1953 and in 1964 they were married. Later she worked as an usher in the Theatre on the Balustrade in Prague, where Havel was the resident playwright and which they both left after the false dawn of 1968.

In the period of Havel's imprisonment, starting in 1979, she worked in his place for the *samizdat* publisher Edice Expedice, an activity for which she was charged with subversion and interrogated for four days.

From the letters which Havel wrote to her from prison came the book *Letters to Olga*, today translated into many languages. At the same time she also worked with others on the production of the *Original Video Journal*, which tried to capture on film the grim reality of life in Communist Czechoslovakia.

In the tradition of the work of the Committee for the Unjustly Persecuted, she established — once her husband was President — a new Committee of Good Will. In 1992 this became the Committee of Good Will-Olga Havel Foundation, and members of the committee became the foundation's board of directors, which Olga headed.

Its main aim is to help people with disabilities, or who are the subjects of discrimination, to have a full role in civic society. After five years of work with the foundation, for which she raised nearly £15 million, she decided to initiate an annual Olga Havel Prize to be awarded to the disabled person who had done most to improve the lives of people with physical or mental disabilities.

She was last year named Czech Woman of the Year — a



fitting recognition of someone who had become in fact as well as name (though she herself did not like the title)

First Lady of the Republic. She is survived by her husband. There were no children of the marriage.

MORE JOBS FOR OVER 45s

FIRMS' PREJUDICE DECLINING
After four years of effort, the officials of the "Over Forty-Fives Association, which seeks to find work for middle-aged and aging men, are able to report that the prejudice of employers against giving elderly people jobs is being broken down. Those who have employed men recommended by the association have been so impressed by their ability and conscientiousness that they are making further requests when suitable jobs are available. Many more offers of employment are needed, however. The voluntary association, which is not to be confused with the "Over Forty" Association which does similar work for women, now has 3,000 members who pay \$2 a year. Last year it was finding jobs at the rate of 40 a month for men whose services would otherwise be lost to industry and commerce. In four years, over 1,000 elderly men have been found employment; many other members found jobs by their own efforts, but there are still many who need work. Unlike an employment agency, the association makes no charge when a vacancy is filled. All the work, until recently, has been done in the London office in Kensington, where Major J.W.K. Bathe, the honorary secretary, himself aged 80, has done noble work persuading

ON THIS DAY

January 31, 1956

In 1950, the Over Forty-Fives Association thought that the prejudice of employers against giving "elderly people" jobs was breaking down; it is unlikely that this could be claimed today.

employers to take elderly men. Now a second office has been opened in Leeds in the charge of Mr. Peter Houghton, aged 69, a former manager in industry. Eventually it is hoped to open offices in other parts. The Association has many former service officers and colonial and Civil servants on its books. Others, men of great experience in administration, engineering and black-coated professions have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, or are finding it impossible to live on their pensions. The attitude of these men is typified by the remark of a retired Army officer who insisted that he "must get a

job of some sort". He eventually took one in commerce, at £9 a week. When a fruit-juice firm wanted extra men during the hot weather for their bottling department, a former naval officer was one of those who rolled up their sleeves to earn £11 a week. Many who are accepted for temporary work are eventually given permanent jobs. A group of men, taken on by an oil refining firm in this way, sent a message to the secretary recently expressing their gratitude. A retired judge who did not serve long enough in that capacity to qualify for a pension, is now happily employed as a nightwatchman. Another retired man, who could not find work in his profession, is now a uniformed porter at £9 a week, with all meals provided. Engineers whose jobs abroad were "liquidated" have been found posts at £900 a year and many of the difficulties to do with compulsory superannuation schemes have now been overcome. Some firms have made pension provisions. The bugbear of Major Bathe's life is the employer who rings up to say: "I want a man with a pension of about £4 a week. If I pay him £5 he will be doing nicely." Major Bathe insists that there is no substitute for experience and that every man shall be paid what the job is worth.

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[illegible]

Court of Appeal

Law Report January 31 1996

Queen's Bench Division

Evidence impugned by suspicions

Regina v Edwards (Maxine)
Before Lord Justice Beldam, Mr Justice McCullough and Sir Lawrence Verney
[Judgment January 26]

The evidence of police officers whose testimony in other similar cases had become infected with suspicions of perjury was impugned, even though no charges or disciplinary proceedings had been taken against the officers in question, and a conviction based upon their evidence could not safely be supported.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held allowing an appeal by Maxine Edwards, on a reference by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under section 17(1)(a) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968, against her conviction in July 1994 at Staines Crown Court (Judge Gies and a jury) of possessing a class A drug (cocaine) with intent to supply, for which she was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment and recommended for deportation. A confiscation order was made in the sum of £282,26.

Mr Nicholas Fooks for the appellant, Mr Kenneth Aylett for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE BELDAM, giving the judgment of the court, said that on September 18, 1990 Detective Constable Gillan and Police Constable Carroll, members

of the drug squad from Stoke Newington police station, arrested the appellant on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of a controlled drug.

At her trial the appellant denied that she had ever been in possession of the drugs allegedly found in her pocket and said that she had refused to sign DC Gillan's account of the conversation in the police car because she had not made any oral admissions. She maintained that the officer had made them up in order to secure her conviction.

She was convicted and her applications for leave to appeal were refused. Her case was subsequently referred to the Court of Appeal by the Home Secretary under section 17(1)(b) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968.

The appellant was one of a number of persons who had been convicted on very similar evidence and who had complained that the charges against them had been fabricated. An investigation, code named Jackpot, was undertaken. DC Gillan and PC Carroll were two of the officers whose conduct came under scrutiny in the course of the Jackpot investigation.

The jury in two cases in which PC Carroll gave evidence did not accept his evidence and acquitted the defendants. Two further cases, where PC Carroll was the arresting officer, did not come for trial

until Autumn 1992, by which time Operation Jackpot had resulted in two or three officers being suspended and other officers being transferred to other duties. The prosecutor offered no evidence and the charges against them were dropped.

On March 2, 1993 five appeals were heard together by the Lord Chief Justice (R v Brown (Everard), R v Kingsley, R v Odehinde, R v Carter, R v Tufnell). They were all concerned with drug offences, based on evidence from officers of the drug squad of Stoke Newington police area. Three cases depended entirely upon the integrity of police evidence and the other two substantially.

Mr Aylett, who appeared for the Crown on the hearing of the appeals, told the court that after due consideration the Crown did not think that it could contest the evidence of the police officers who had been convicted. He was serious about the honesty of that evidence which, it was alleged, had been fabricated.

On May 24, 1993 the Court of Appeal heard the appeal of Mr Baptiste. Among the grounds of appeal it was alleged that the conviction was unsafe because the evidence of PC Carroll and other officers, upon which Mr Baptiste had been convicted, was tainted and unreliable, as demonstrated

by the refusal of juries to accept the evidence of those officers in other cases.

Counsel for the Crown in that case conceded that if the material in respect of the cases where the juries acquitted had been available to be put before the jury who tried the appellant, it might very well have affected their assessment of the credibility of the officers in question and indeed the Crown would not have sought to proceed with the prosecution. Therefore it was conceded that the Crown could not resist Mr Baptiste's appeal.

In the instant case Mr Aylett was not prepared to concede that the conviction was unsafe. Operation Jackpot had not concluded and no charges or disciplinary proceedings had been taken against the officers who had arrested the appellant. The cases in which the Crown Prosecution Service had offered no evidence resulted from a policy decision taken to prevent a possible miscarriage of justice.

On May 24, 1993 the Court of Appeal heard the appeal of Mr Baptiste. Among the grounds of appeal it was alleged that the conviction was unsafe because the evidence of PC Carroll and other officers, upon which Mr Baptiste had been convicted, was tainted and unreliable, as demonstrated

Establishing limits of estuary

Regina v Secretary of State for the Environment, Ex parte Kingston upon Hull City Council

Regina v Secretary of State for the Environment, Ex parte Bristol City Council and Another
Before Mr Justice Harrison
[Judgment January 26]

Member states had a discretion when deciding how to establish outer estuarine limits for the purposes of article 212 of the EC Urban Waste Water Directive 1991/271 (OJ 1991 L354/40) but the breadth of that discretion did not embrace consideration of the cost of treatment of the waste water to be discharged.

Mr Justice Harrison so held in the Queen's Bench Division when allowing applications by Kingston upon Hull City Council and Bristol City Council together with Woodspring District Council for judicial review of the decisions on May 18, 1994 of the Secretary of State for the Environment when establishing the outer estuarine limits of the Humber and Severn Estuaries and when designating those estuaries under the Urban Waste Water Treatment (England and Wales) Regulations (SI 1994 No 284).

The regulations implemented the provisions of the EC Urban Waste Water Directive in the United Kingdom. The issue between the parties related to whether primary or a

more stringent and expensive, secondary treatment level of household and industrial sewage was required under the legislation.

As all the relevant discharges of waste water within the applicants' jurisdiction were above a certain level the potential for only primary treatment of it, existed only if the discharges were in high natural dispersion areas in coastal waters rather than within estuaries.

The secretary of state contended that he was permitted to establish the outer estuarine limit in such a way as to be cost effective in circumstances where there would be no adverse environmental effect.

Miss Geneva Caws, QC, Mr Philip Sands and Mr Jonathan Marks for the local authorities; Mr Nigel Fleming, QC, for the secretary of state.

MR JUSTICE HARRISON said that Miss Caws had submitted that in establishing the outer limit of an estuary it was necessary to apply objective criteria. A criterion based on the salinity of the receiving waters should have been used or one based upon the topographical features of the receiving waters. There was not an unfettered discretion in establishing the outer estuarine limit, she said, and cost was not a relevant consideration.

The secretary of state submitted, inter alia, that the directive contained no criteria for ascertaining the outer limit of the estuary and he therefore had a wide discretion.

He submitted that there was nothing wrong in using the man-made topographical features of bridges to define the limit and that he was entitled to take the high cost of secondary treatment into account.

His Lordship said that article 212 of the directive did not specify any criteria which a member state had to apply when establishing an outer estuarine limit, if it had been intended that salinity or topography had to be used as a criterion the directive could have said so.

The fact that no criteria were specified led his Lordship to the conclusion that it was intended that member states should have a discretion in deciding how to establish limits.

His Lordship did not therefore accept that salinity or topography had to be used in establishing those limits. There were, however, criteria which could be used in establishing those limits because they were obviously relevant considerations when identifying the true limits of an estuary.

The important point was that there had to be genuine and rational assessment in each case of what actually constituted the estuary, having regard to all the relevant circumstances relating to the characteristics of the area of water in question and to the purpose of the directive to prevent adverse environmental effects.

In his Lordship's judgment the cost of treatment of the waste water was not a relevant consideration in

that exercise. An area of water either was or was not an estuary regardless of what it would cost to treat waste water discharged into it.

The directive said that discharges to estuaries over a certain amount had to be the subject of secondary treatment regardless of whether or not those discharges were into high natural dispersion areas.

It would be quite wrong to redraw the boundary of what would otherwise have been a genuinely assessed estuary for the purpose of the directive in order to escape the clear requirement of the directive.

If cost considerations were allowed to permit boundaries to be redrawn the result would be the establishment of estuaries which were not really estuaries at all but areas of water defined in such a way as to avoid the obligations imposed by the directive.

His Lordship was satisfied that cost considerations played a major role in the respondent's decision. The only explanation for the decision had been one of pragmatism based on the cost of providing secondary treatment and consideration of its environmental consequences. In his Lordship's judgment that approach violated the directive.

Solicitors: Mr P. M. Barker, Kingston upon Hull, Mr D. Lewis, Bristol and Mr T. Simplin, Weston super Mare; Treasury Solicitor.

Omissions lay judgment open to serious criticism

Meredith and Another v Wm A. Merrick & Co (a firm)
Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice McCowan and Lord Justice Thorpe
[Judgment January 25]

Failure by a judge deciding a case of professional negligence by solicitors to refer in his judgment in crucial evidence given by the solicitor defending the action, to examine documents consistent with that evidence and to leave the resolution of an issue of alleged forgery by a practising solicitor to depend on the general burden of proof without making positive findings, laid his judgment open to serious criticism. As a result the defendants had not had a trial to which our system of justice entitled them.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by the defendants, Wm A. Merrick & Co, a firm of solicitors, from the decision of Judge Rudd, sitting as a judge of the High Court at Southampton in April 1994, ordering them to pay damages of £46,419 to the plaintiffs, Peter and Helen Meredith. A retrial of the action by a High Court judge was ordered.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by the defendants, Wm A. Merrick & Co, a firm of solicitors, from the decision of Judge Rudd, sitting as a judge of the High Court at Southampton in April 1994, ordering them to pay damages of £46,419 to the plaintiffs, Peter and Helen Meredith. A retrial of the action by a High Court judge was ordered.

Mr Martin Fodder for the defendants; Mr James Leonard for the plaintiffs.

LORD JUSTICE NOURSE said that the plaintiffs' claim was that the defendants had been negligent in procuring a payment of £38,000 to be made into a company account, where it was almost immediately lost, instead of into their personal bank account.

The defence was that the payment had been made by the solicitors in accordance with the plaintiffs' instructions.

The outcome of the case essentially depended on what had taken place between the parties on two dates in December 1985.

The judge's treatment of the events of those days was open to a number of serious criticisms. It was incumbent on him in deciding crucial questions of fact to refer to evidence from the defendants and to consider in the court below. They had not had the trial to which our system of justice entitled them.

The judge's decision gave rise to a feeling of deep unease. He had referred in very disparaging terms to evidence given by the defendants' senior partner who, whatever the judge might have thought of him, was unable to give relevant evidence as he had played no part in the events.

But the most serious criticism was that the judge failed to face up to the most important part of the case: the plaintiffs' allegations of a forged attendance note.

It was incumbent on him to make a positive finding one way or the other on allegations as serious as those, especially when made against a practising solicitor.

On the matter as a whole it was regrettable to be concluded that the defendants had suffered a substantial wrong in that their case on crucial issues in the action had not been fully or properly considered in the court below. They had not had the trial to which our system of justice entitled them.

When once the suspicion of perjury started to infect the evidence and permeated cases in which the witnesses had been involved, and which were closely similar, the evidence on which such convictions were based was impugned, to the extent that it plainly was in the cases where appeals had already been allowed.

In such cases it was impossible to be confident that had the jury which convicted the appellant known the facts and circumstances in the other cases in which PC Carroll was involved, they would have been bound to convict. That, in their Lordships' view, was the appropriate test.

In the instant case, the only evidence that the appellant had possession of crack cocaine came from the two police officers. PC Carroll's evidence was impugned and in all the circumstances the conviction was unsafe. Accordingly, the appeal would be allowed.

Solicitors: Porters, Tottenham; Crown Prosecution Service, Headquarters.

Ingredients of liability for business rates

Hampson (trading as Abbey Self Storage) v Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Before Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Lord Justice Evans and Lord Justice Roch
[Judgment January 18]

The legal possession of land alone was not sufficient to make an occupier liable to business rates.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing an appeal brought by Douglas Hampson, trading as Abbey Self Storage, against the dismissal by Mr Justice Macpherson on November 24, 1994 of his appeal by way of case stated from the decision of Newcastle upon Tyne Justices issuing a distress warrant for £30,265.17 for non-payment of business rates in respect of part of premises at Forth Street, Newcastle.

Mr George Bartlett, QC and Mr Christopher Boyle, neither of whom appeared below, for Mr Hampson; Mr Nigel Macdonald, QC, who did not appear below, and Mr Christopher Lewinsky for the local authority.

LORD JUSTICE ROCH said that Abbey Self Storage took possession of the premises on June 17, 1989.

It provided self-contained storage space for both domestic and commercial customers in individual lockable storage cubicles as well as industrial and storage space let on conventional terms.

For rating purposes the premises were divided into seven separate hereditaments. The local authority set a rate and demands were sent. There was no dispute as to liability to rates in respect of areas 1, 2 and 3.

However, Abbey Self Storage disputed liability on the basis of non-occupation in respect of areas 4, 5 and 6 and between June 17 and July 7, 1989 in respect of area 4.

Area 4 was used from July 7, 1989 following the installation of cubicles, electrical, security and heating services. Area 5 was empty in 1989. It had been available to let since April 1, 1991 until March 4, 1992. Area 6 comprised open

space. Area 7 was partially let to self-storage customers from February 2, 1991.

The first question posed by the justices was whether they had erred in concluding that there was rateable occupation in respect of areas 4, 5, 6 and 7 on the basis of their finding that Abbey Self Storage had maintained a "continuing intention to use those areas within the main business".

Mr Justice Macpherson rejected the submission that intention to use the areas within the main storage business was not sufficient to satisfy the "occupation" criterion in section 16 of the General Rate Act 1967 since he found the present case very close to, if not on all fours with, *R v Melkard* ([1907] 1 KB 192).

His Lordship was unable to accept the submission on behalf of the local authority that there was no need for any overt act for there to be rateable occupation.

In *Ryde on Rating* and the Council Tax (Issue 3, volume 1, section B at paragraph 61) four ingredients were given to make an

occupier liable to business rates as follows: actual occupation or possession; exclusive for the particular purposes of the occupier; possession to be of some value or benefit to the possessor and that the possession was not for too transient a period.

The ownership by Abbey Self Storage of the areas in dispute did not make them occupiers for the purpose of rating law since the first and third ingredients were missing. The legal possession of land alone was not sufficient to make an occupier liable for rates.

Furthermore in the Court of Appeal Mr Bartlett had referred to *Arbuckle Smith & Co Ltd v Greenock Corporation* ([1960] AC 813) which had not been cited below and which provided insuperable difficulties to the local authority.

Lord Justice Evans and Lord Justice Stuart-Smith delivered concurring judgments.

Solicitors: McKenna & Co, Mrs Valerie A. Dodds, Newcastle upon Tyne.

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Smutty comedienesses and girls behaving badly on television are not the right ways to go about persuading men to take us seriously

Why we should not belittle women

Liz Forgan said a funny thing the other day. Speaking in Dr Johnson's house, at Radio 4's party to launch the 1996 *Reith Lectures* (The Language Web begins on Tuesday), the managing director of BBC Radio declared that anyone making jokes about dogs walking on hind legs would be swiftly shown the door.

Lord Reith, a man of the wireless age, might not have agreed with Dr Johnson's cruel comparison of women preaching with dogs walking upright. Yet even he might have been startled that the Reith lecturer should be a woman. Dr Jean Aitchison, an Oxford linguist, is only the second female to achieve the honour since the series was begun in 1948 by Bertrand Russell.

Reith would certainly have been surprised by the eminence of Ms Forgan. Many decades and 15 BBC chairmen were to pass by before the corporation allowed itself the novelty of a woman on its board of management.

Women on top, yes, but not very many. Their scarcity helps to explain why — equality supposed —

ly achieved — the success of a female is still so newsworthy. It also explains, if not justifies, such blatantly discriminatory strategies as all-women shortlists and women-only book prizes.

But women in public life have more than curiosity value. They make good illustrations. A woman's face brightens any page, any magazine cover, any news bulletin, any advertisement. I recently overheard a media reporter waxing enthusiastic because the outcome of some trade competition or other had created the opportunity to photograph a model in bridal dress. "How often," he exclaimed, "can you get a woman's picture on the business page in something other than a suit?"

Their photographic usefulness burdens women in public roles. Appearance and clothes count the way they don't for men. Accordingly, Ann Widdecombe is ridiculed and Harriet Harman is not.

As Tony Blair's *Spitting Image* puppet declared on Sunday, there is no way that Harriet is going to be sacked "because she looks nice". (And the Princess of Wales's personal troubles are compounded by her awareness that the camera is her only unreserved admirer.)

There is no way, therefore, that the media are going to become gender-blind. Certainly not if the current crop of women comics carry on. A shrewd eye, an acid tongue and impeccable timing, you would think, would be sufficient to show that stand-up comedy is no male prerogative. But no. The effort goes in to trying to make men uncomfortable — the troubles we girls have that you louts know nothing about!

What an overdose of oestrogen we had last weekend. ITV's surreal *Pajama Party* was had enough, with its frilly nighties and fake giggles. Channel 4 offered, in succession, the American import,



BRENDA MADDOX

Cybill, where the sulky daughter Zoey spells out for her dimwit father that her menstrual cramps mean that her uterus is sloughing off spare cells.

Then the star of another bit of Americana, *Roseanne*, quipped about preparing her nipples for lactation by rubbing them on a cheese grater. On then waddled Jo Brand to make jokes mainly about her size but also one about mastectomy prostheses. It was all

about as funny as a Women's Studies seminar, laced with a self-loathing of the female anatomy.

'Twas not enough. We then got *The Girlie Show* — the first of Channel 4's new 10-week series to show women behaving badly, which means once more dressing up in scanty clothes and making ribald remarks about that alien species, men. But as the mainly male audience leered and howled and the females strutted their Lycra, one could only wonder: Who was stalking whom?

No aspect of political correctness irritates me more than the campaign to persuade women that they ought to ogle body parts because many men do. Washing my hands in the ladies' loo at BBC Wales last week, I found myself looking at a pasted-up magazine photo of two tall young men in shorts on a harbour dock. Puzzled, I then noticed that the shorts were wet and clinging. Cuddly? Because

we have to look at girlie calendars to reclaim our cars from the garage, it is only fair that we should do the same to them.

But if not pin-ups, what? What, to quote Freud's famous confession of ignorance, do women want? How, as the media are desperately seeking to do, to lure them into male preserves like the business and sports pages, or the Internet?

Well, not by giving them a whole radio station. The falling audience figures for the women-centred *Viva!* (963mw) attest to the basic boringness of the format. But women's magazines are something else again, and the much-maligned teenage magazines, such as *Sugar*, *Mizz*, *Bliss* and *Shout*, come as close as you can get to answering Freud's question.

Now I quite believe Peter Luft, MP for Worcester, when he tells me that the aim behind the Bill he

will introduce next Tuesday is not to censor these teen magazines. He wants simply to have them labelled with the age of their intended audience so that parents and teachers will pay some attention to what is inside.

So they should, and it may not be what the alarmists suggest. What these little essays on erections, wet dreams and testosterone, adorned with naughty titles such as "Men Unzipped" and "Boys Bits", tell me is that what 1990s teenage girls want is sexual information and advice in quite explicit form. They make clear the moral of the case of Sarah Cook, or the runaway 10-year-old pregnant girl in Texas: that female bodies mature a lot earlier than the *Daily Mail* thinks they should.

These teen magazines also make it very clear what girls don't want. Like Sarah Cook, they want not to be laughed at for being fat and spotty. They don't want a broken heart. They want to catch and hold their boyfriend, not, as *The Girlie Show* boasts, to make him nervous. In short, they want to be women, not blokes.

Beware of the press watchdog

Brian MacArthur looks back over the PCC chairman's first year in office

When Lord Wakeham became chairman of the Press Complaints Commission a year ago, his appointment was dismissed by some on the Left as another calculated attempt by the Fleet Street establishment to calm Parliament's fears about the over-mighty press.

Too many backbenchers had passed the point at which they might have been mollified by "Good Old John", said Roy Hattersley, the veteran Labour MP, author and journalist.

Yet a year on, Mrs Thatcher's "fixer" — Lord Wakeham was her Chief Whip and Leader of the House — seems to have fixed it yet again. Within 12 months the issue that has dominated the relationship between Fleet Street and Westminster for more than a decade — the threat of statutory curbs on the press — seems to have been decisively resolved in favour of self-regulation.

When you meet Lord Wakeham, it is not difficult to understand why he has put up such an impressive performance. There is a calm determination, self-assurance and steel about the man that must have been forged from his traumatising experience of the Brighton bomb, where his wife was killed and he was trapped under rubble for seven hours and nearly lost his legs.

He arrived with a strategic plan and one by one he ticks off the items on his agenda from a year ago. "I had first to ensure that the Government, the public and the House of Commons — and in that order — thought that the PCC was a serious organisation doing a reasonable job."

So the first job was to ensure the PCC's independence from the newspaper industry. That was done by appointing three independent members — Lord Irvine of Lairg, Sir Denis Henderson and Sir Geoffrey Holland — to the committee that appoints commissioners. With new members such as Baroness Smith, the widow of John Smith, the former Labour leader, or Sir Brian Cubbon, former Permanent Secretary of the Home Office, he also increased the stature and clout of the commissioners themselves.

The second was to win back authority by avoiding off-the-cuff comments

and speaking out only when the PCC had an agreed position (which, being a politician, he usually cleared with editors and proprietors beforehand). That enabled him to offer warnings about the privacy of lottery winners and the protection of Prince William when he went to Eton (a policy subsequently used to protect the sons of Tony Blair and Harriet Harman).

Still more important for Wakeham, who had seen how tenaciously tabloid editors fought back when they were about to be criticised, was to get editors themselves to take the PCC seriously. That occurred in spades, and followed a meeting over breakfast, when Rupert Murdoch unreservedly supported a critical adjudication against the *News of the World* for invading the privacy of Countess Spencer, the Princess of Wales's sister-in-law.

He publicly rebuked Piers Morgan, who was then its editor. Morgan, said Mr Murdoch, chairman of The News Corporation, parent company of the *News of the World*, *The Sun*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, had gone over the top. It would not tolerate its papers bringing popular journalism into disrepute.

An organisation once derided as a "toothless watchdog" had suddenly got real teeth. That, for Lord Wakeham, was the "defining moment" of his first year. "Editorial freedom is fine but the statement by Mr Murdoch demonstrated that the standards by which we wish to be judged go wider, that an institution depends on the maintenance of those standards," he says. It was the Murdoch endorsement, ac-



Lord Wakeham remonstrates with the press over codes of practice

ording to Lord Wakeham, which finally persuaded the Government that the PCC was "serious and for real".

What Wakeham has brought to the PCC are the skills of an astute politician who knows how to work Westminster and Whitehall. As a former Chief Whip, he also knows when to be brutally frank with editors or ministers, as he has, and when to lay on the charm, as he does.

With the PCC Helpline (0171-353-

3732), which gets up to 150 calls a week, he has used those skills to warn editors privately when they have been in danger of trespassing against the code. He has also visited editors and encouraged them to ring him when they have doubts about the ethics of news stories, a service which several have used.

At *The Sun*, the verdict of the Editor, Stuart Higgins, is that Wakeham has done a very good job without being obtrusive. "His office has worked closely with me and senior colleagues when things were a bit touch and go. Our regular conversations have dramatically reduced the number of complaints, with the vast majority being resolved without being upheld." A few editors still worry that a political appointment has set a bad precedent for the PCC. Lord Wakeham is unfazed. He points out that he was appointed by the newspaper industry and not the Government. "Nobody could point to a single act or statement that would seem to indicate the slightest party bias. I approach this job as an impartial chairman."

1995 — A YEAR OF RISING COMPLAINTS

ONE symbol of the Wakeham regime is the publication today of the PCC's 1995 annual report. The 1996 Press Council report was not published until 1988. It is a glossy, designer job which shows that the number of complaints to the PCC rose 30 per cent last year to 2,508. ● About 7 out of 10 complaints concerned inaccurate reporting ● 413 complaints were resolved

directly after the PCC's intervention or not pursued ● Only 12 per cent related to intrusion into privacy ● 63 complaints were adjudicated and 28 upheld ● Of the 403 complaints investigated, 104 were against national dailies (5 upheld), 74 against national Sundays (10), 79 against regional dailies (4) and 29 against magazines (2).

Alexandra Frean reports on the Guardian Media Group's struggling Sunday title

Storm clouds gather at The Observer

Nearly three years after *The Guardian* acquired it, *The Observer* newspaper is hovering on the brink of a crisis. Sales are falling, losses are mounting, staff morale is low and its news content is deemed by many to be lacklustre. Speculation mounts daily about how long its Editor, Andrew Jaspas, 43, can survive in his job.

Despite repeated denials from its parent company, the Guardian Media Group, that there is a problem with *The Observer*, the title is clearly absorbing much of its energies. On Monday last week, Alan Rusbridger, Editor of *The Guardian*, took eight senior heads of department out to dinner to discuss the future of the two titles. This was followed on Tuesday by a meeting of the Scott Trust, the charitable body which oversees both titles. On Wednesday the main board met "to discuss production issues"; it met again last Monday.

The company has refused to comment on any of these meetings or on the future of *The Observer*.

Monday's meeting could not have come at a better time for Mr Jaspas. On Sunday, *The Observer* had had its strongest scoop of the day with its splash about the gagging order on Jara Kays, the former mistress of Lord Parkinson.



The Observer's problems, however, are not just to do with content and low staff morale. They are as much to do with numbers. The paper is thought to have lost at least £7.5 million last financial year, and £9.5 million this financial year, the increase being accounted for by the staggering £2 million start-up costs of the Preview section.

Some in the industry have questioned the wisdom of management in raising the cover price from 90p to £1 in the middle of December, traditionally a poor month for sales. The price rise came just five weeks after the decision, on November 11, to drop a special voucher scheme, under which *Guardian* readers could purchase



Alan Rusbridger, left, and Peter Preston have watched *Observer* losses mount

The Observer for 50p. In October, the last full month in which the voucher scheme was running, 46,000 — or nearly 10 per cent — of the average weekly sales of 484,236 were accounted for by "copies sold at a lesser rate", according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC). Small wonder, then, that in December *The Observer* should have lost a bigger share of its readers than any other Sunday title. Sales fell by 6.23 per cent, or 30,119, on the previous month.

The advertising community believes that *The Observer* desperately needs to push sales back to the psychologically important 500,000 level — where it stood at the time of



the takeover — before advertising yields, and hence revenue, can increase significantly. Derek Morris, joint media director of BMP, the media buying agency, believes it is vital to find a way to make the paper survive. "With around 36 per cent of national newspaper circulation going through Murdoch titles, it is essential to our clients that we can give them access to an audience through another buying point," he says.

Neil Jones, of the media buying agency, TMD Carat, believes *The Observer* has failed since its merger with *The Guardian* to exploit its links with the

paper. In 1993, 30 per cent of *Observer* readers polled by the National Readership Survey said they were also *Guardian* readers and 33 per cent of *Guardian* readers said they read *The Observer*. Since then, those figures have edged up to 33 per cent and 37 per cent respectively.

"The figures are getting better, but they are still low. To me, this is the most fertile ground for them to exploit and so far they have failed," Mr Jones says.

What baffles many in the newspaper industry is how the *Guardian* Media Group, under the stewardship of its Editor-in-Chief, Peter Preston — for 19 years the respected Editor of *The Guardian* — could have let this happen. After all, the daily title underwent a successful, though highly controversial, redesign in 1988. And it has also survived two years of newspaper price cuts without having to reduce its own cover price.

A change in editor may be a partial solution to *The Observer's* problems, but it is not the only option. The introduction of new talent into the newsroom may also help. Another option believed to be under discussion is the merger of all or some of the departments of *The Guardian* and *The Observer* into a single seven-day operation.

Alan Mitchell on the alcoholic fruit drinks explosion

Beer is for bores as the market goes pop

Once upon a time things were simple. If you fancied a drink you had beer, wine or spirits. Not any more. Politicians and pressure groups may be fuming at the rise of "alcopops" such as the alcoholic lemonades Hooper's Hooch and Two Dogs, but the drinks industry knows a bandwagon when it sees one.

This week Bass, the marketer of Hooper's Hooch, confirmed that it was planning to launch new orange and blackcurrant variants, while Codd Corporation, which makes colas for Sainsbury and Virgin, enters the fray with a vodka-laced cola, Barker's Liquid Gold.

Already, 30 alcopops are on the market. These include Sainsbury's Piranha, Tilt, an alcoholic tropical-fruit crush, alcoholic strawberryades and Sub Zero, an alcoholic "soda" from Scottish Courage.

Amid widespread fears that these drinks are attracting — perhaps even targeted at — underage drinkers, the *Fortnum* Group, the industry-funded body which aims to promote responsible drinking, is now working overtime to lay down rules about the naming, packaging and point-of-sale promotion of such products. But it is chasing a moving target.

Faced with declining beer and spirits sales, the drinks industry is unleashing a flood of bizarre new products. According to IIS (Mintel), 900 new beverages were launched in Europe last year, 25 per cent more than the year before. Nearly half were alcoholic and many sound mind-bogglingly exotic, such as Canada Atomic (an alcoholic iced tea from Molson breweries), White Moose (a white chocolate mousse dessert beer), Cran-Cherry (beer plus cranberries and cherries) and Double Black Stout, a double-fermented brew of coffee and stout.

There are even alcoholic "health" drinks. Among the products currently on offer in continental Europe are Stark Storm rum, Dr Jekyll vodka and Fly Away — a mixture of wine and tropical fruit juices — all of which contain caffeine-rich guarana, an Amazonian plant extract presumed to deliver, along with the alcohol, a "double buzz" to every consumer.

Then there is My Way Wellness Drink, a wine with added vitamins B, C, E and omega-3 fatty acids, which are supposed to help to prevent heart disease and strokes. Alcoholic waters are said to be in preparation, as well as potent 30-per-cent-alcohol drinks such as Scoops, which come in ice-cream flavours.

Will such offerings ever collectively capture a major share of the market? Compared with the £90 billion we spend annually on traditional alcoholic drinks, they are small beer. Alcopop sales this year could reach between £200 million and £400 million. Yet every big company is rising to the challenge.

According to David Jago, an IIS Mintel researcher, novel flavours are being used to rekindle interest in alcoholic drinks and rake in short-term profits. But he claims that most of the new products represent no more than desperate attempts by marketers to stand out from the crowd.

"Many of them are just vile," he says. "Consumers will try them and be disappointed. I would give alcopops one more summer." But Paul Millman, the managing director of Merrydown which distributes Two Dogs and Barker's Liquid Gold, claims the same thing was

said about lager when it was introduced. Alcopops offer people the same "quaffability" as lager, he says, as well as extra refreshment and the pleasure of new fruit tastes.

Simon Lester, managing director of Cott Europe, the company behind Barker's Liquid Gold — agrees that alcopops have passed the consumer test. So is a new category of drinks really emerging for good?

Derek Simonds, specialist drinks researcher of Cardinal Research, traces the rise of alcopops to the "beer boredom" which he claims has set in among young adults. Jaded by the craze for all manner of highly priced bottled beers, they are, he says, looking for something new — and now marketers are giving them permission to drink something other than beer.

Mr Simonds describes the competitiveness as a "feeding frenzy" in which the majority of new products will fail. But there has, he says, been a real change in the market.

He points to the success of products such as Smirnoff's Moscow Mule, a mixture of vodka, lime juice and ginger beer, and Gordon's Gin Zing, another product containing guarana, as evidence that big new brands may soon be established. Such drinks may be spirits-based, he points out, but they are consumed on "beer occasions".

To judge from the way such drinks are being pushed, everything from morning tea to afternoon sports could soon be excused for some sort of alcoholic "occasion".

THE TIMES DILLONS LECTURE

Richard Leakey and the Sixth Extinction

THE FIVE mass extinctions of species on the planet were all natural disasters. Speaking at a *Times/Dillons* lecture on Monday, February 12, chaired by Richard Dawkins, Richard Leakey, the Kenyan politician and renowned palaeoanthropologist and conservationist, will warn us that we are heading for a sixth.

Our capacity to exploit the world's resources beyond the point of natural renewal is leading us to the verge of a man-made catastrophe, he says. *Homo sapiens* could destroy entire species and trigger the sixth extinction.

The lecture marks the publication of Dr Leakey's new book (with Roger Lewin), *The Sixth Extinction: Biodiversity and Its Survival* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £18.99), and will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1E 6EQ, starting at 7.30pm. Tickets at £10 (£7.50 concessions), which includes £3 off the price of Dr Leakey's book, are available by phoning 0171-915 6613, by faxing the coupon below on 0171-580 7680, or by sending the coupon with your remittance to: Dillons, 82 Gower Street, London WC1E 6EQ, where tickets can also be purchased.

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Why this man will spend £10,000 down at the pub

Living space for newts in a new town

Great One in search of final taste of glory

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 31 1996

Conglomerate unveils plan to split into four separate listed companies

Hanson break-up stuns City

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

HANSON stunned the City yesterday by unveiling a radical break-up plan that will result in the company splitting into four separately quoted companies with share listings in London and New York.

The move comes after 16 years during which Hanson transformed itself from a family haulage business into a global force valued by the stock market at £10.5 billion.

The four new companies will comprise the company's energy, chemical, tobacco and building materials divisions. Hanson said that it was aiming to complete the demerger by the end of the year but the company would need clearance from tax authorities and shareholders before it could proceed.

Lord Hanson, chairman of Hanson, said: "We are making this exciting and radical move to create even better management and growth opportunities. All four business-

es will continue to be built up by investment, acquisition and increased capital expenditure to deliver future growth."

Hanson is employing Rothschilds and Hoare Covett as advisers, but has not ruled out new advisers acting for the demerged companies as they prepare to float.

The company is unable to put a figure on total costs at this stage but described them as "containable". Estimates, including tax bills, put them in the region of £120 million to £150 million.

The City applauded the demerger decision and at one stage Hanson's shares reached 230p, up 15.5p, before slipping back to close at 211p. But credit rating agencies such as IBCA, Standard & Poors and Moodys expressed concern about the implications for the demerger and placed the company under review with a view to a possible downgrade in its credit rating. Hanson said

that its existing debt would be divided between the four new companies.

Hanson has been under pressure for its poor performance. The company has underperformed the FT-SE 100 by almost 50 per cent over the past year and reported a fall in profits and a frozen dividend in its full-year results.

Christopher Collins, vice chairman, said: "The demerger plan is the natural culmination of a continuing strategy to focus on fewer larger businesses."

The building material and equipment division will retain the Hanson name and the existing quote, and will include companies such as Grove and Hanson Brick. The new company will also hold Hanson's 12.5 per cent interest in the National Grid. Lord Hanson will remain as chairman until his retirement. Christopher Collins will be deputy chairman and Andrew Dougal, Hanson's financial director, will become chief executive.

The energy division will be centred on Eastern Group, the electricity company purchased last year, and Peabody, the coal company. It will be listed in New York and London. Derek Bonham, Hanson's chief executive, will step in as chairman. John Devaney will remain chief executive at Eastern and Irl Englehard will be chief executive at Peabody.

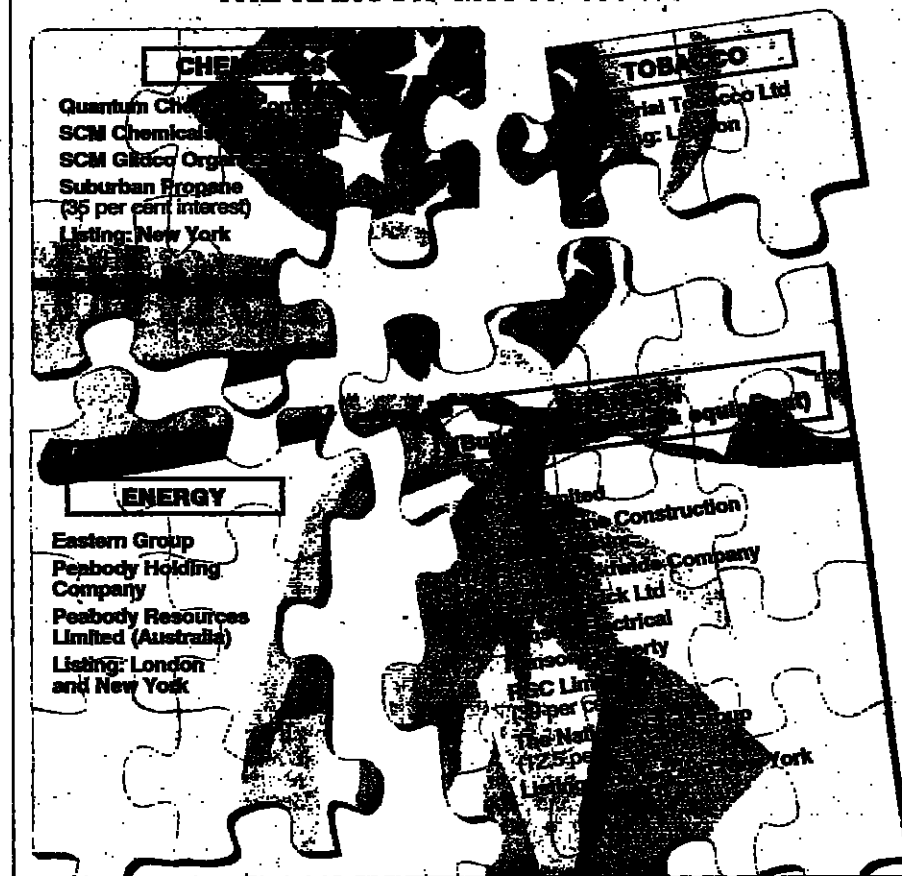
The tobacco division will be built around Imperial Tobacco and will be listed in London by September 30. Derek Bonham will be chairman, with Anthony Alexander vice chairman and Ronald Fulford chief executive.

The chemicals division will be listed in New York by September 30. It will consist of SCM and Quantum and will hold a 35 per cent stake in Surburban Propane. Bill Landy will be chairman and chief executive while Robert Lee will be president and chief operating officer.

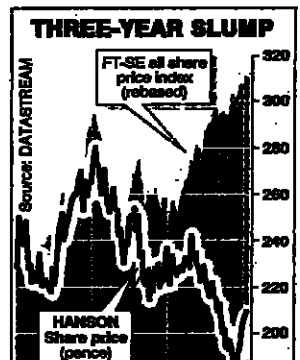
Hanson said that none of the four companies plans to raise any new equity as part of the demerger. The aggregate dividend across the four companies would be maintained in 1996, although each company will pay a dividend relative to its own sector.

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City diary, page 27

THE HANSON GROUP JIGSAW



Derek Bonham: energy chief



Lord Hanson hailed the plan as an exciting and radical move

Goodbye to the ageing darlings

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

HANSON'S decision to split into four separate companies appears to sound the death-knell of the aggressive conglomerate.

The conglomerate, a company which pursues interests across a wide range of sectors, was the darling of the 1980s and men such as Lord Hanson and Owen Green at BTR became famous. But since the turn of the decade the conglomerate has fallen foul of a shift in City philosophy which has chosen to stress focus and investment over acquisitive growth and "milking" assets.

The trend towards demerger started at the beginning of the decade with companies such as Rascal spinning off Vodafone, and ICI floating off the company's drugs division as Zeneca. These companies were often under pressure from takeover bids, and in the case of ICI it was the unwanted attentions of Hanson that prompted the demerger.

In America, there has been a spate of demergers, prompted by the belief that a divided company will provide better value for shareholders. ITT has announced plans to float off three separate companies. It has been rewarded with a 50 per cent rise in its shares.

In the UK, Thorn-EMI is soon to announce plans to float off its highly valued record division. EMI's share price has risen 250 per cent since the company first suggested its demerger options in 1993. Others, such as BT, British Gas and BAT are tipped to follow suit.

But not every conglomerate has been convinced by the demerger logic. While Hanson was unveiling its plans yesterday, an unrepentant Greg Hutchings, chairman of Tomkins, was revealing details of his latest £770 million purchase and insisting that his conglomerate was still performing.

Tomkins agrees deal, page 25

Swansong of a mighty empire

BY JON ASHWORTH

THE mighty Hanson, without Lord White, was always going to be different. Just how different became apparent yesterday when, five months after the death of his long-time partner, Lord Hanson initiated the break-up of an empire founded on decades of ruthless expansion.

Fragmenting Hanson into four separate companies could well mark a swansong for the combative peer, 74 earlier this month, who has a year to go to his planned retirement. The move will ensure that the Hanson of old passes with him into history.

Lord Hanson, who has run the Hanson conglomerate as a personal fiefdom, talks enthusiastically of four mini-Hansons, spanning bricks, electricity, chemicals and tobacco, and destined to become substantial public companies in their own right. He intends to shape the dismantling.

The seeds for the Hanson empire were sown in 1964, when James Hanson and Gordon White took control of

the Wiles Group, later to become Hanson Trust. Heavily influenced by the expansionist preachings of Jim Slater, the pair embarked on a string of takeovers on both sides of the Atlantic, moving at a pace that left their prey outclassed and outmanoeuvred.

Hanson came into its own in the 1980s, snapping up Ever Ready, London Brick, Imperial Group and others, and rounding off the decade with a £3.5 billion tilt at Consolidated Goldfields. The Nineties brought change, and by the time of Lord White's death last August, Hanson's American consumer businesses had been spun-off in a \$2 billion flotation.

The peer's last act was to orchestrate Hanson's £2.5 billion bid for Eastern Group, Britain's biggest regional electricity company.

Lord Hanson as ever was intent on that last big deal. Few could have imagined that his own company would prove the victim.

OFT attacks hidden prices

BY SARA MCCONNELL

RETAILERS could be forced by law to display the prices of warranties for electrical goods if they continue to flout the provisions of a code intended to allow customers to compare prices, the Office of Fair Trading has said.

John Bridgeman, Director-General of the OFT, yesterday attacked retailers for their failure to supply customers with price information. He said: "The considerable reluctance of many retailers to display prices consistently gives suggest that they recognise very well that the prices of most warranties represent poor value for money."

Last May, the British Retail Consortium bowed to pressure from the OFT and intro-



Bridgeman: warned retailers

duced a code of conduct for its members, which include most of the big retailers. But OFT researchers have found that only one third of retailers visited actually displayed

prices of extended warranties. Less than half the branches of Currys and Comet did so for televisions or washing machines. Only 40 per cent of retailers provided takeaway leaflets with prices.

An estimated five million warranties are sold every year to cover the cost of potential repairs to electrical goods. Some retailers earn a significant amount of their profits from the sale of warranties. But the cost to the customer is frequently three or four times the average cost of repairs.

Mr Bridgeman, yesterday told retailers that if there were not "substantial improvements" by May, he would ask the Department of Trade and Industry to make a price-marking order, requiring retailers to display prices.

QE2 director gets £232,000

JOHN OLSEN, the director of Trafalgar House who resigned after the disastrous refit of the QE2 as it embarked on its world cruise last year, is to receive compensation for loss of office of £232,000.

Mr Olsen's payoff is less than the £290,000 he earned in the whole of the previous financial year. He was paid £163,000 for the eight months of the current year that he worked before departing at the end of June.

Mr Olsen left after an ill-fated QE2 cruise, started before a £30 million refit was finished. The company paid refunds of £8,000 and offered alternative cruises to 500 passengers left behind.

Alliance unveils float today

BY PATRICIA TEHAN AND ANNE ASHWORTH

ALLIANCE & Leicester Building Society will today announce plans for a £2.5 billion flotation, intending to beat rivals Halifax and Woolwich to the stock market.

Alliance & Leicester has been working on flotation plans for months. It will hold an extraordinary meeting of voting members towards the end of this year and believes it will be ready to shed its mutual status, convert to bank status and float by March or April next year, months before the other two. Qualifying members will each receive free shares worth an average of about £900.

It has held lengthy discussions with the Building Societies Commission and a draft of its transfer document is being

finalised. After members have voted, there is a 13-week period when the BSC will listen to representations from members before confirming that the society can go ahead with its plans. The society would not yesterday confirm the timing of any disclosures.

The Alliance & Leicester has already gone some way to its goal, having acquired Girobank in 1990. The stock market valuation of the whole group is estimated at about £2.5 billion based on current market estimates.

The flotation means a free share bonus for the Alliance & Leicester's three million eligible members, those savers and borrowers with voting rights. However, only those

who were with the society at December 31, 1995, will qualify. Alliance & Leicester share accounts, those which carry votes and the right to benefit from flotation and merger payouts, were closed to new customers two weeks ago.

The Woolwich is due to make its stock market debut in the autumn next year. The Halifax, which last August merged with the Leeds, has yet to declare its date.

The Woolwich, which made its flotation announcement on January 11, chose December 31, 1995 as its cut-off date, a decision which has caused considerable controversy since those who have opened accounts since then are still eligible to vote.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100	3725.3	(+0.7)
Yield	3.89%	
FT-SE All share	1830.82	(+0.93)
Nikkei	20722.44	(+133.24)
Dow Jones	5945.08	(+40.10)
S&P Composite	627.73	(+3.51)

Federal Funds	5.75%	(5.75%)
Long Bond	5.11%	(5.11%)
Yield	6.04%	(6.04%)

3-month Interbank	9.75%	(9.75%)
1-year long gilts	11.0%	(11.0%)

New York	1.5045	(1.5068)
London	1.5043	(1.5073)
Frankfurt	1.5112	(1.5088)
Paris	1.5097	(1.5080)
Yen	1.2255	(1.2188)
S. Index	161.24	(161.05)

US\$ 100	1.4882	(1.4885)
DM	5.1180	(5.1038)
Sfr	1.2130	(1.2055)
Yen	107.23	(106.75)
S. Index	161.2	(161.0)

Tokyo close	Yen 108.80	
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MONTHLY SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$16.10	(\$15.90)

GOLD		
London close	\$405.35	(\$405.75)
		* denotes midday trading price

Three-way split values SelecTV at £46m

BY ERIC REGULY

SELECTV, the producer of *Birds of a Feather* and *Lovely Joe*, was broken into three pieces yesterday and sold to Pearson, MAI and Carlton in a deal that valued the company at £46 million.

The complex process, which was designed to avoid the payment of capital gains taxes, began when Carlton Communications, the largest ITV company, bought SelectTV's cable channel for £5.2 million.

After that transaction was completed, Pearson, the media company, agreed to pay 29p a share, £46 million, for the remainder of SelectTV. Pearson will then sell SelectTV's 15 per cent stake in Meridian Broadcasting to MAI for about £30 million.

Pearson, in the end, will own only SelectTV's production and distribution divisions, whose net cost comes to about £8 million.

Pearson said that it has already received acceptance for 25 per cent of SelectTV's shares. The largest amount came from Allan McKewon, chief executive, who owned just over 7 per cent. The 29p offer represents a premium of 18 per cent on the share price of October 11, when SelectTV announced that it was in takeover talks. The shares closed yesterday at 28p.

SelectTV will not pay CGT on the sale of its Meridian stake to MAI. The tax will be paid by MAI if it sells Meridian.

Mr McKewon, 49, has returned to America, where he and his wife, the actress Tracey Ullman, are producing the second series of *Tracey Taken On* for HBO, a cable TV channel.

Tempus, page 26

Weak US figures send Dow soaring

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS
CORRESPONDENT

WALL Street soared yesterday on hopes that the latest batch of weak economic data will persuade the US Federal Reserve to cut interest rates today.

At mid-session in New York, the Dow Jones industrial average had surged 50 points, triggering limits on programme trading. The surge of buying came after a dismal confidence reading and slightly weaker than expected retail sales figures for December. Together, they appeared to confirm suspicions that the economy was losing momentum fast at the end of last year.

Total retail sales increased by 0.3 per cent in December, having risen by 0.7 per cent in November. Economists had expected a gain of 0.6 per cent in December. Yesterday's figures left sales growth in 1995 as a whole at its weakest for four years.

Meanwhile, the Conference Board reported that its index of consumer confidence had plummeted to 87.0 in January from a revised 99.2 in December. This was the lowest reading in more than 18 months.

The market's rally yesterday reflected belief that the Fed will now be more likely to cut rates at the end of the two-day meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee today rather than wait for the next meeting in March.

However, others suggested that the weak data coming in for December and January may have been depressed by a number of one-off factors, including government shutdowns and blizzards which hit the east coast in January. They said that the Fed may still want to wait for more reliable evidence.

The central bank cut the federal funds rate — the rate private banks charge each other for overnight money — just last month, by a quarter percentage point to 5½ per cent. It has not reduced the symbolically significant but economically less important discount rate it charges banks for money since July 1992. That rate now stands at 5½ per cent.

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TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.13	1.97
Austria Sch	16.72	15.23
Belgium Fr	46.56	44.66
Canada \$	2.186	2.028
Cyprus Cyp	0.753	0.698
Denmark Kr	8.47	8.47
Finland Mk	7.41	6.76
France Fr	6.10	7.46
Germany Dr	2.39	2.18
Greece Dr	361.00	366.00
Hong Kong \$	12.51	11.31
Ireland P	1.02	0.94
Israel Sh	5.190	4.460
Italy Lit	2516.00	2361.00
Japan Yen	175.20	159.00
Malay	0.582	0.532
Netherlands Gld	2.657	2.427
New Zealand \$	2.41	2.19
Norway Kr	10.36	9.58
Portugal Esc	244.00	225.00
S. Africa Rd	91	82
Spain Ptas	166.50	163.50
Sweden Kr	11.11	10.31
Switzerland Fr	3.76	3.57
Turkey Lira	ref	88953.0
USA \$	1.005	1.475

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank plc. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



Bearing up: Richard Johnson, left, chief executive of Wyko, the engineering group based at Dudley, West Midlands. Philip White, its chairman, and Geoff Winters, the finance director, who yesterday reported a rise in interim profits to £2.03 million, up from £740,000. The interim dividend is increased to 1p a share from 0.5p, payable from earnings of 2.74p (1.37p). The shares rose 8p to close at 95p

KPMG breaks mould with first accounts

By ROBERT BRUCE

KPMG has become the first large accountancy firm to publish an annual report and accounts. For the first time, speculation over partnership earnings can be claimed on actual figures.

The partnership earned total fees of £588.8 million, up 6.8 per cent on the previous year. Out of that, the 586 partners took £88.88 million. Colin Sharman, the senior partner, took some £740,000.

The report and accounts, which had been eagerly awaited, looked and read like that of similar corporate enterprises, which at least part of KPMG will become tomorrow, when its audit practice becomes a plc. Mr Sharman said: "For

the first time, the clients of a leading accountancy firm will be able to see the full financial position of one of their major suppliers. We believe our clients are entitled to expect this. We have nothing to hide, and therefore, are hiding nothing."

Books opened28

The firm has divided its normal system for partners earnings into three categories to ape the corporate format. Figures are divided between executive remuneration, which is calculated through a benchmarking system run by Heidrick & Struggles, the firm

of consultants, pension contributions, and proprietorship profit.

The proprietorship profit element, the report says, fell sharply during the year, reflecting pressure on margins. The figure quoted is a fall of 28 per cent on the previous year, which reflects the competitive nature of our market place and our continuing investment in people and services", the report says.

Reading between the financial lines, analysts calculate that 428 partners earned between £100,000 and £255,000, while a further 70 earned anything up to £670,000.

This is the first time that such figures have been avail-

able, and suggests that London and the South East of England have 1,400 partners, including the other large firms, earning similar amounts.

The only accounting firm likely to follow KPMG's example, in publishing full figures, is Ernst & Young, though, in Mr Sharman's view, all the others will have to follow eventually.

Speculation continues over the likely appointment of an auditor. The KPMG accounts were unaudited, but its new KPMG Audit plc will require an auditor. The National Audit Office of Buzzacott, the City firm of accountants, is the favourite.

Bouygues stands to show Fr4bn loss

By GEORGE SIVELL

BOUYGUES, the French construction group that was a member of the consortium that built the Channel Tunnel, said yesterday that it would report a net loss for 1995 of about Fr4 billion, including total provisions of about Fr4.4 billion for the year.

Bouygues, however, is to sell Fr3 billion of non-core assets in the next 18 months to concentrate on managing public service contracts, television and film production, and telecommunications. The previously announced sale of the Grands Moulins de Paris property is expected to contribute half of the disposals.

Martin Bouygues, chairman of the company, was questioned earlier this month by examining magistrates in France over allegations that he paid cash into a political slush fund.

Yesterday, M Bouygues said the inquiries would not jeopardise the company's future. He said: "These affairs are different from the future of the company. He declined to comment on the inquiry, but said the company was not the target of the investigations. M Bouygues was released on bail of Fr500,000 after questioning.

The company said that of the provisions announced yesterday, Fr3.2 billion was for property assets and Fr1.2 billion was for developing telecommunications.

Bouygues is confident of a return to profit in 1996 of about the Fr573 million net attributable profit generated in 1994. The 1995 dividend is to be held at Fr25.5, the same as 1994. The company said that excluding provisions it would have made a profit of about Fr400 million in 1995. Total turnover for the group was estimated at Fr81.3 billion, up 2 per cent from 1994.

The group's cash stood at Fr6.2 billion, equal to its outstanding debt. The company said that it would launch its mobile telephone network through Bouygues Telecom in the first half of 1996.

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Training reform flawed says study

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

PLANS for individual learning accounts as a way of funding increased training could well miss out a quarter of Britain's working population — the flexible workers that they are particularly designed to help.

A new study published today looks at individual learning accounts (ILAs), which both the Government and the Labour Party are examining as a way of supporting industrial training in the future.

Under ILAs, every individual would contribute a weekly sum of money to their personal training "account", and have it matched by an employer. The Government is examining the possibility of voluntary ILAs, but Labour is more attracted to their being compulsory as a more modern means than a training levy of requiring business to fund increased training.

The independent Unemployment Unit — a jobs pressure group — says that there are fundamental weaknesses

behind ILAs. In a study, carried out by a London School of Economics academic and an independent employment consultant, the unit says that the unemployed, people on low incomes and the self-employed could well be excluded from ILA measures.

It says that there are "substantial" problems of administering such accounts without a large new bureaucracy, as well as possible costs to employers that they would be likely to pass on in terms of either lower wages or job cuts.

The unit says that in spite of being favoured by both political parties, little evidence exists on the impact of ILAs. Examining proposals under which employees would pay £1 a week and employers £2 into accounts, it suggests that the resulting annual total of £156 would make a considerable difference to the training market, in terms of money available to providers, but would be insufficient to provide much training for the individuals concerned.

Northern Rock lifts profits 25%

By KAREN ZAGOR

THE Northern Rock Building Society lifted its pre-tax profits by 25 per cent, to £147 million, last year on strong growth in lending. Reflecting the increase in loans, the society has raised its provisions for bad debt by 20.6 per cent.

The society said that its £3.2 million increase in bad debt provisions, to £16.7 million, contained a large level of general provisioning for the new loans made last year. Gross lending in the year to December 31 rose by 40 per cent, to £2.25 billion.

Assets grew by 15 per cent, to £11.56 billion. Total income rose by 22.8 per cent, to £249.2 million, from £203 million.

Administration costs, which have risen steadily since merger with the North of England Building Society, grew by 19.5 per cent, to £53.5 million.

Northern Rock, like most other building societies, has been the subject of speculation that it will join its sector's merger mania. It recently raised the minimum amount



Sharp: backs independence

to open a membership account to £2,500, from £250.

Christopher Sharp, managing director, said Northern Rock was still attracting borrowers and savers at a remarkable rate. "Thankfully last year we had no merger, takeover or conversion distractions, though, with others, we were still the subject of idle speculation," he said. "I hope, however, that these results demonstrate Northern Rock's commitment to independence."

Blue Circle submits plan for 175-acre site

BLUE CIRCLE INDUSTRIES said some 20,000 permanent jobs could be created in a development in the Ebbsfleet Valley, north Kent, where it has applied for planning permission. A subsidiary of Blue Circle has applied for outline consent to develop 175 acres of a 435-acre site over the next two decades. The application has been submitted to Dartford and Gravesham borough councils in line with government policy and part of the Department of Environment's Thames Gateway Initiative.

The project centres on the railway station due to open in 2002 at Ebbsfleet on the new high-speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link between London and continental Europe. The plans include proposals for up to 5.3 million sq ft of commercial development and 3,200 new homes over a period of 15 to 20 years. Educational facilities, hotels, leisure, and supporting retail, social and cultural centres are included.

Tunnel provisions

EUROTUNNEL'S British banks are expected to make substantial provisions against their exposure to the troubled Anglo-French Channel tunnel operator when they announce their 1995 results over the next few weeks. Eurotunnel's 225 banks are owed a total of £8 billion. NatWest and Midland are the worst hit British banks, with outstanding loans of about £300 million and £220 million respectively. Analysts said that NatWest is likely to make provisions in excess of £100 million, and Midland Bank is expected to follow suit with provisions for about 30 per cent of its outstanding loans.

Sale for Standard bank

STANDARD CHARTERED BANK has found a buyer for its loss-making Asian securities operation in a deal estimated at £5 million. Nava Finance & Securities, a Thai brokerage house, is to buy most of the business, subject to regulatory consent. About 250 employees will move over to Nava, owned by the Thai Military Bank. Talks for Nava to buy a controlling stake in the securities operation broke down last summer. Now, Nava will take 80 per cent, and Thai Military Bank 10 per cent. Standard Chartered will retain 10 per cent because the business will still serve Hong Kong personal customers.

Stakis could spend £70m

STAKIS, the hotels and casinos group, said yesterday that it could spend up to £70 million to buy any mid-market hotels put up for auction by Granada, which last week paid £3.8 billion for the Forte hotels and catering group. A purchase of that size would push Stakis's gearing from 30 per cent to 50 per cent. It has no intention of going beyond that level. David Michels, chief executive, said Stakis is interested in any three and four-star hotels in Britain that Granada wanted to sell. Granada intends to keep the bulk of the brands, mid-market Forte chains, such as Posthouse and Heritage.

Forte to stage meeting

FORTE's extraordinary meeting, to be held tomorrow morning in London, is going ahead even though Granada now controls the company. But the meeting, which was called to approve the sale of Forte's roadside restaurants to Whitbread for about £1 billion, may go down as the shortest in history. Granada said it will use its majority voting power to call an adjournment within seconds of the start of the meeting. The company launched its hostile bid primarily to acquire the restaurants and it has no intention of selling them.

Copper prices inquiry

AMERICAN and British regulators are believed to be co-operating in an investigation into possible manipulation of world copper prices. The Securities and Investment Board and the Securities and Futures Association are co-operating with the US Commodity Futures Trading Association after the US regulator allegedly by-passed them and made direct contact with London-based companies. SIB is believed to have objected after it was by-passed by the CFTA and is now co-operating with the US regulator. The SIB and the SFA said there were established routes for such investigations.

Hotel group seeks listing

MACDONALD HOTELS, a privately owned hotel group based in Scotland, is to seek a listing on the London Stock Exchange through a placing in the first half of this year. The group, which owns 16 hotels located mostly in Scotland and operates a further 33 across the UK, hopes to raise between £20 million and £30 million in new money. It will be capitalised at about £80 million. Macdonald Hotels reported pre-tax profits of £3.7 million on turnover of £28.8 million for the year ended March 26. The company's chief executive is Donald Macdonald.

Harry Ramsden's up

THE exceptionally warm summer had a negative impact on peak-period business in key locations but failed to dent the progress of Harry Ramsden's, the chain of fish and chip shops. In the year to October 1, the company lifted pre-tax profits to £1.15 million, from £950,957. Earnings per share increased to 8.5p, from 7.8p. A final dividend of 4p a share, due March 26, makes a total of 5p (4.5p). The shares rose 8p, to 319p. On Monday, the company announced an agreement with Compass Group, the contract caterer, to open new outlets at international airports.

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□ Hanson's demerger before his swan song □ Electrical retailers face a clampdown □ City debates the merits of EMU

The Great Unbundler

LORD HANSON may have been knighted by a socialist Prime Minister, but his empire reached its apogee under Mrs Thatcher and declined, at least in the eyes of the City, as the Government grew greyer. There is a pleasing symmetry in Hanson's dismemberment into its constituent provinces just as Tony Blair looms on the horizon.

First, the official chronology. The US consumer businesses were floated in June, at which time, to the outside world, Hanson was still in expansion mode in spite of the dim view the institutions took of conglomerates. In fact, in the dark basements of Grosvenor Place demerger was then being whisped, if not actually plotted.

But the next month saw the bid for Eastern Group, a clear diversification both into another industry and into regulated utilities. It did not find favour with the shareholders. Wall Street does not like utilities, which traditionally operate under a tighter regulatory collar in the US. The City merely thought Hanson had overpaid.

By December, the proposed \$1.5 billion sale of various assets had put the group in the right shape for division into four parts, and the whispers had become corporate policy.

To the outsider, it all smacks of the Grand Old Duke of York,

this building up of a mighty conglomerate and then an expensive dismantling. But Hanson is reflecting the changed perceptions of the investment community, travelling a path already trod by BTR, now a more focused engineer after its own disposals, and old adversary ICI which hived off Zeneca.

Perceptions have changed because such bundled conglomerates required perpetual motion machines to keep going, in the form of constant buying and selling. There is no longer a supply of inefficient companies to hoover up, while accounting changes have made such deals less appealing as they are reflected in the accounts.

The problem with conglomerates is that nobody loves each and every bit of you. Within Hanson, the Americans don't like tobacco and the Brits distrust chemicals and other cyclical businesses such as building products. And neither much cares for regulated companies. Without strong growth, such perceptions outweigh other strengths, witness Hanson's dismal stock market performance,

held up by little more than its 7 per cent yield.

The unofficial chronology, political factors excepting, is that Lord Hanson can now complete the demerger by his swan song at next year's annual meeting, even if the tax implications are far from worked out.

For the City, it is the deal from Heaven, better even than Granada vs Forté because there is no reliance on success fees, and the indications are that the goodies will be well spread around the wide range of Hanson advisers. A couple more mega-bids, and 1996 may just keep pace with the bonanza year of 1995.

OFT warning is well warranted

YOU buy a pound of mince, if the health and metrication gauleiters will let you, and it has the price stamped on it: you buy an insurance policy and ditto. It is up to you to decide what you need, and no one strong-arms you into a purchase.

So why have electrical stores such as Dixons almost come to



blows with the Office of Fair Trading? The OFT has put out a strongly worded warning that unless the retailers come into line, draconian measures over disclosure of their extended warranty deals will come into force after a review in May.

These would compel the shops to display, alongside their tempting special offers, just how much such warranties on the equipment they sell cost, and what benefits they confer. This is broadly in line with the voluntary code the industry has imposed on itself.

The retailers think they are already at that standard of disclosure, which begs the question why they might mind a mandatory system. The OFT

says it is impossible to have proper competition, which would force prices down, when the purchaser cannot compare those prices from shop to shop.

The first thing to know about these extended warranties is that they are almost all a rip-off, at any price. Electrical components either fail shortly after manufacture, when they are covered by the manufacturers' own guarantee, or they last pretty well forever. It is the cheaper moving parts that may go wrong with continued use.

This is why, as the OFT found out, the cost of warranties is two, three or even four times the cost of the estimated average repairs the equipment might need over the warranty period.

The second is that they are enormously lucrative for the retailers. Dixons is cagey about how profitable, but analysts' estimates suggest as much as a half of operating profit for the current year. You do not make that level of profits by providing much of a consumer service.

The retailers are not going to be hurt even if a mandatory system is drafted in. Previous

spates of bad publicity have not deterred sales, even short-term, investors should note. For the consumers, caveat emptor.

The currency of dreams

IT IS the topic that crops up eventually at almost every City lunch and dinner: the cost, the pain, and the number of jobs left at the end of it.

Kenneth Clarke insisted yesterday that the single European currency was still possible by the end of the decade. Those of us who live on planet Earth, however, have long abandoned that timetable. What worries the City is that decisions, on investment in the machinery of conversion for example, will have to be taken long before any of the uncertainties have been resolved.

Those uncertainties can be listed thus: will it happen, when will it happen, and as a final wild card, will Britain opt in or opt out? The Futures and Options Association on Monday night staged a timely debate aimed at assessing what the City thinks

The debate was couched in terms of pure self-interest, and was all the better for it. The anti included Rodney Leach, of Jardine Matheson, Sir Alan Walters and Roger Bootle, and, in terms of arguments marshalled and the eventual vote, they won the day.

The view that grabbed much of the attention from an audience of City professionals was the fear of the Prussian jackboot. To be fair, what was meant was the fear that overly rigid German-style regulation would force international business out of European markets. As one example, in Frankfurt there is a 5 per cent limit on how much an individual pension fund can put into assets that are not denominated in marks. The possible parallel with the Euro-dollar market, forced to London by American over-regulation, is striking.

At the start of the evening, those who thought the City would benefit from a common currency and the agnostics balanced the anti. By the end, there were few agnostics, and the anti outnumbered the pros by three to one. It is dangerous to extrapolate from such a straw poll, but the suggestion is that there are an awful lot of swing voters undecided in the Square Mile, and a strong mistrust of EMU.

A little like the rest of the population, really.

Tomkins agrees £768m bid for Gates Rubber

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

TOMKINS, the industrial conglomerate, yesterday finalised the acquisition of Gates Rubber, placing a price of £768 million on the US automotive and industrial rubber company.

While rival Hanson was announcing its plans to demerge, its businesses, the Gates purchase represents Tomkins' largest acquisition since the £990 million acquisition of Rank Hovis MacDougall, the food producer, in 1992. The Gates family will become the largest single shareholders in Tomkins with about 15 per cent of Tomkins' capital on conversion. Tomkins said that the Gates family intends remaining as long-term shareholders.

The purchase means that

Tomkins is now the world's largest manufacturer of power transmission belts and hose products for the automotive industry. Gates will add up to £1 billion in sales to Tomkins' existing £3.7 billion turnover and the company said that the deal would not dilute earnings.

Tomkins will pay for the deal with two issues of convertible preference shares to Gates' shareholders. It will issue £461 million of shares with a dividend equivalent to a gross yield of 6.7 per cent, and £307 million with a dividend equivalent to a gross yield of 5.25 per cent. The conversion price offered for the preference shares will be 25 per cent above the average price of Tomkins' American Depository Receipts (ADRs) in the month before closing.

Greg Hutchings, chairman of Tomkins, said: "Putting £1.1 billion into Tomkins after six months spent analysing our company is a huge compliment for us." Gates made pre-tax profits of £36.6 million and had sales of £786 million for the nine months to September 30. The company has net outstanding debts of £138 million, which will be absorbed by Tomkins' £300 million cash pile.

Around half Tomkins sales and 40 per cent of its profits come from the UK and the company has faced criticism over its heavy reliance on the home market. But about 67 per cent of Gates' sales are in North America, with South

America contributing around 7 per cent.

Gates, founded in 1911 and based in Denver, Colorado, has 21 plants in North America, seven in South America, 11 in Europe and two in the Far East. It is the largest privately held business in the world with all its shares owned by the Gates family or linked foundations. Charles C Gates, its chairman, will step down from the company but will join the Tomkins board as a non-executive director.

Tomkins' share price closed up 4.5p at 284p as the City reacted positively to the details of the deal which is expected to be closed by late spring.

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BR sale raises £2.1bn

THE break up and sale of British Rail has raised £2.1 billion for the Treasury to date, the Government announced yesterday (Jonathan Prynn writes). Of the near 100 separate companies that BR was divided into, 32 have been sold, including three rail franchises and the three rolling stock companies (Roscos). Most raised only nominal sums, but the proceeds from the Roscos exceeded £1.8 billion. A further six rail passenger franchises are on the market, including The Children's Railway, which was offered for sale yesterday. The biggest remaining asset sale will be Railtrack, which is expected to raise about £1.8 billion in May. Merrill Lynch and UBS were yesterday appointed global managers to the flotation.

Bid war looms at Lloyds Chemists

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

A TWO-WAY takeover bid battle for Lloyds, the chemist company, is looming after Gehe, the German pharmaceutical group, admitted formally it was weighing up its position before making a counter-offer to the £540 million bid already made by UniChem.

Gehe said yesterday it had submitted a request for information from Lloyds, the preliminary move to making an offer.

On the Stock Exchange the price of Lloyds shares slipped back 6p to 444p, while UniChem retreated 1p to 248p. The share price of the last few days had been fuelled by speculation that Gehe would enter the takeover fray.

Analysts suggested Gehe may need to pitch the bid as high as 480p, valuing Lloyds

at £575 million, compared with the 450p offered by UniChem. This brought concern that a bidding war would result in the winner overpaying for Lloyds, which has struggled to erode the retail market domination of Boots.

UniChem and Gehe each hold around one third of the British drug retailing and wholesaling market, with Lloyds controlling six per cent. Gehe is the largest drug wholesaler in the Europe and already owns 300 chemists in the UK after the £400 million acquisition of AAH holdings in 1993.

Lloyds owns 924 chemists, the healthcare store Holland and Barrett, a specialist veterinary medicine wholesaler and a general wholesale business.

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SE looks at insider policy

THE Stock Exchange is examining how and when it can make public information about its formal investigations into insider trading (Patricia Tehan writes).

It would like to see clarification of what information it can make public regarding its investigations and referrals.

Any such changes to its policies would require approval from the Department of Trade and Industry. Its current policy is not to comment on such work.

The Stock Exchange is believed to feel that such a threat of publicity would help to act as a deterrent to those tempted to deal on insider information.



Figurework: Royal Doulton has bought Holland Studio Craft, a designer and manufacturer of hand-painted fantasy and novelty giftware, for up to £11 million. Stuart Lyons, Royal Doulton chief executive, right, pictured with Phillip Holland, managing director of Holland

Studio, said the acquisition would enhance earnings this year. Holland Studio, which has annual sales of about £3 million, is likely to benefit from the use of Royal Doulton's international and retail distribution network. Mr Holland will stay with the company.

RMIM in new trust sell-off

By CAROLINE MERRELL

RIVER & Mercantile, one of the UK's largest investment trust managers, yesterday sold the management of its £28 million American Capital and Income Trust to Henderson Touche Renmant. The sale is another step towards the break-up of the group.

An announcement on the sale of the management of the £200 million River & Mercantile Trust itself is expected today. The 117-year old River & Mercantile Trust is the jewel of the River & Mercantile group. Robert Fleming, the investment bank, is tipped as the most likely buyer.

River & Mercantile Investment Management is 49.9 per cent owned by John Beckwith, the property developer, with the rest owned by the £200 million River & Mercantile Trust. Last year RMIM hired Hambro Magan, the merchant bank, to manage the auction.

GM profits leap to record \$6.9bn

FROM REUTERS IN DETROIT

GENERAL MOTORS earned a record \$1.9 billion in the final quarter of 1995 and finished the year with the highest profit in the history of the world's largest carmaker.

Fourth-quarter earnings were 18.7 per cent higher than for the equivalent period in 1994 when net income was \$1.6 billion. GM's profits in 1995 totalled \$6.9 billion, compared with \$4.9 billion in 1994, the previous record year. About 352,000 employees in the United States will receive profit-sharing payments of about \$800 as a result.

John F Smith Jr, chairman of GM, said: "The record fourth-quarter and calendar-year results demonstrate the solid progress made toward achieving our goal of consistent industry-leading financial results, even though the overall worldwide industry was slightly weaker in 1995 than

during the previous year." Net income from North American operations edged ahead by less than 1 per cent in the fourth quarter to \$603 million. But, for the year, it surged more than 250 per cent to \$2.4 billion, from \$677 million. Net income from international operations gained almost 10 per cent to \$498 million, from \$454 million, leading to a year-on-year gain of 4 per cent (\$1.64 billion from \$1.58 billion).

GM said that vehicle deliveries in the US in the final quarter increased to 1.21 million units as its market share grew to 33.5 per cent from 33.3 per cent. For 1995, US deliveries totalled almost 4.9 million units, a market share of 32.4 per cent (32.8). On Monday, GM's finance, defence electronics and computer services subsidiaries reported total profits up 13 per cent.

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Investors cautious over talk of US bid for Rec

YORKSHIRE ELECTRICITY could be the next utility to come under the spell of a foreign bidder.

That was the talk in the Square Mile yesterday amid claims that a consortium of international banks, including several Japanese houses, are putting together a package on behalf of West Coast, the US utility. It has been suggested that West Coast may be ready to offer 800p a share, valuing Yorkshire at £1.23 billion.

Yorkshire is one of the few remaining independent Recs, but has been tipped as a bid target for some time. It is believed West Coast wants to raise enough funds to ensure the success of a bid.

There was certainly little in the Yorkshire share price last night to suggest that a bid was imminent with the price closing just 4p dearer at 684p. The rest of the equity market again lacked direction with investors still pinning their hopes on the Federal Reserve Open Market Committee signalling a cut in US interest rates this week. But ahead of today's £3 billion gilt auction few investors were willing to stick out their necks. Even so, a strong opening rise in the Dow Jones industrial average enabled the FT-SE 100 index to wipe out an earlier fall of more than 20 points. It closed 0.7 up at 3,735.3.

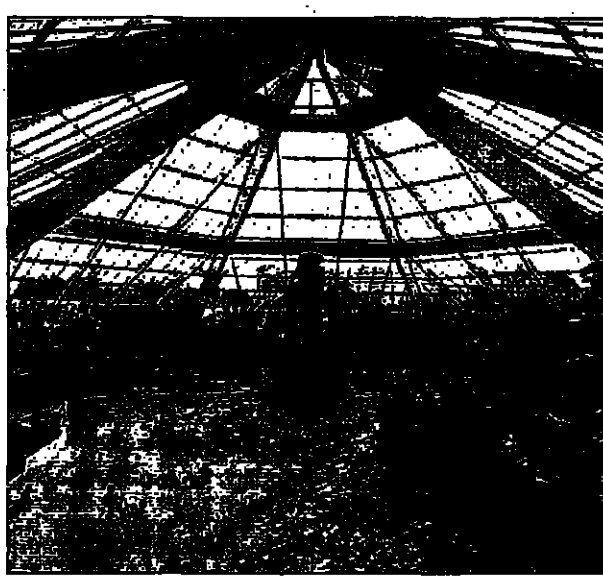
Volume reached 839 million but there was no sign of the large programme trade reported to have been carried out first thing.

News of the decision to split Hanson, the Anglo-American conglomerate, into four received a mixed reception in the City. The group proposes to split its energy, chemicals, tobacco and building materials and equipment divisions.

But the group appears to have lost much of its popularity with institutional investors. The shares ended 7p dearer at 221p after briefly touching 217p with 114 million traded.

Glaxo Wellcome was sent 18p higher at 933p after Merck, the US drug group, claimed its Crivian anti-Aids treatment produced better results when combined with the British company's AZT and Efavir treatments.

Continuing worries about a price war among high street lenders in the wake of this week's gloomy mortgage figures unsettled most of the big names. Brokers fear that margins are likely to be eroded.



S&N advanced ahead of a brokers' trip to Center Parcs

Abbey National fell another 19p to 595p. Bank of Scotland 13p to 299p. Barclays 8p to 785p. Lloyds TSB 16p to 318p. Royal Bank of Scotland 22p to 565p. Standard Chartered, a recent takeover favourite, hardened another 5p to 641p despite denials of any formal talks by the company earlier this week. Greenalls hardened 10p to 897p. Meanwhile, Fortis was 8p lower at 341p after going ex the special dividend.

Lloyds Chemists retreated 5p to 445p with Gehe, the German pharmaceutical distributor, confirming recent speculation that it was considering whether to make an offer. Lloyds is currently the target of a 412p a share

offer from UniChem, valuing the entire company at £448 million. UniChem, faced with the prospect of an expensive battle for control of Lloyds, eased 1p to 248p.

SelectTV, the independent television producer, moved up 4p to 28p after confirming details of an agreed bid by Pearson, publisher of the *Financial Times*. The terms of a 29p a share value SelectTV at

£46 million. SelectTV, which produces *Lovely Joe* and *Birds of a Feather*, will be merged with the television division of Pearson headed by Greg Dyke.

Pearson, up 9p at 659p, has also agreed to sell its 15 per cent holding in Meridian, the independent south-coast broadcaster, to MAI, its former owner, at 346p. The price agreed values the stake at £30 million.

Scottish & Newcastle, the drinks and leisure group, hardened 10p to 627p ahead of a trip by brokers tomorrow to the group's Center Parcs complex at Longleat. But rival Allied Domecq fell 17p to 512p on talk of a profits downgrade by Cazenove, its own broker. Cazenove is reported to have cut its pre-tax profit forecast for 1997 from about £700 million to £665 million. By the close of the week, almost five million shares had changed hands.

Q8 Holdings, the clothing retailer, was left nursing a fall of 4p at 38p after announcing its intention not to pay a dividend and giving warning that profits during the second half were likely to be little better than break-even. First-half losses were £743,000.

Still reeling from Monday's profits warning, shares of Quality Software Products tumbled 13p to 35p, stretching the two-day deficit to 30p. It means that the group's stock market value of £92 million has virtually halved this week.

GILT-EDGED: The market was encouraged by the disappointing increase in US retail sales. The gains achieved succeeded in wiping out Monday's losses. Investors remained cautious, anxiously awaiting the outcome of today's £3 billion gilt auction. Attention also remains focused on the FOMC meeting in Washington.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt ran up £11.2 to £110.7 as a total of 63,000 contracts were completed. Treasury 8 per cent 2013 advanced £7.2 to £102.16, while in shorts Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was up a tick at £104.32.

NEW YORK: Shares extended their rally into midday on a conviction that yesterday's weaker than expected Government economic data made an interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve all but certain. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 40.10 at 5,345.09.

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 5345.09 (+40.10)
S&P Composite 627.73 (+3.31)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 20722.44 (+133.24)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 11201.46 (+142.49)

Amsterdam:
ROE Index 302.74 (+2.87)

Sydney:
ASX 2265.8 (+13.3)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2435.70 (+10.24)

Singapore:
Straits 2623.66 (+4.59)

Brussels:
General 8895.66 (+113.21)

Paris:
CAC-40 2003.13 (+22.45)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 728.30 (+4.80)

London:
FT 30 2738.0 (+11.4)

FT 100 3733.3 (+0.7)

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Gates open for Tomkins

THE long-awaited details of Tomkins's acquisition of Gates Corporation were drowned out by a deafening explosion from the Hanson iceberg, which is being split from top to bottom into four smaller floating islands. This is unfair to Tomkins, a successful company that deserves more attention, but the market continues to brand it with the "C" word.

Conglomerates, however, can be fun to watch and there is good reason to believe that Gates, the Denver-based maker of power transmission belts, will add value to the company. Doubters wondered whether Tomkins would overpay for Gates, but initial impressions suggest the \$1.6 billion price is sensible, amounting to just over 70 cents per dollar of sales and, assuming annualised net profits at Gates of about \$75 million, an exit multiple of some 15 times suggesting earnings

enhancement. Gates is clearly growing fast: profits for the nine months to September were almost 20 per cent ahead of the return for the entire preceding calendar year. However, the Gates margin of 7 per cent is still well behind Tomkins, offering room for improvement.

The buyer is keen to dismiss talk of savings and rationalisation. Tomkins sees expansion in developing countries as a route to further growth, piggy-backing on the growth of car makers as they establish plants in Asia and Latin America. However, Gates relatively low margins suggest there is scope for greater efficiencies from its 40 factories in 13 countries. The convertible shares have been priced at a relatively high conversion premium of 25 per cent, a positive sign given that 60 per cent of the shares to be issued are irredeemable, leaving conversion the only exit route for the vendor.

Carlton

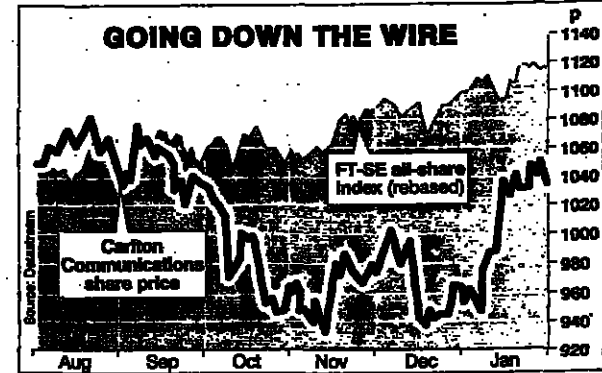
THE £5.2 million purchase price of the SelectTV cable business is small change for a company the size of Carlton Communications. However, companies that forget to look after the pennies do not deserve high ratings, and Carlton will be hard-pressed to turn a profit from the cable channel.

SelectTV Cable boasts popular programmes such as *Birds of a Feather* and *Lovely Joe* but fails to make a profit from its 900,000 subscribers, who generate some 25p each per month from cable companies that carry the programmes. Having paid £5.2 million for a revenue stream of £2.7 million a year, Carlton needs to increase the channel's popularity by extending its hours - it doesn't start broadcasting until late afternoon - but

there is no guarantee that it will attract more advertising or persuade companies to pay more for SelectTV. Satellite transmission is an option, but transponder space is becoming scarce and increasingly expensive.

Carlton clearly believes in the long-term potential of cable channels, and, if true, the deal helps to put a

value on SelectTV Cable's competitors. That should provide a boost to Flextech, which controls The Children's Channel, thought to be for sale and which has about 12 million viewers. Using the same multiple, TCC is valued at no less than £36 million, a fancy price for a channel that cost only a few million to buy.



Lloyds Chemists

GEHE, the German pharmaceutical wholesaler, has good reasons to launch a competing bid for Lloyds Chemists, which has recently chosen to struggle under the wing of UniChem. Last year Gehe took over AAF, the main competitor to UniChem, and, in the process, acquired a 300-strong chain of chemists. However, Gehe's main target then was the wholesaling business of AAF, which boasted a 30 per cent market share, equal to UniChem's but lagging behind in stock-management systems.

Wholesaling is all about volumes, and ownership of a chain the size of Lloyds Chemists would give AAF economies in stock control, allowing it to streamline its system further. However, Gehe is also likely to be interested in the retail chain. Off-the-shelf pharmaceuticals tend to own their own stores, regulation prohibiting

the creation of chains such as Boots or Lloyds. However, the rules are likely to change, and, having seen the potential for margin gains in owning a retail chain, Gehe will be keen to develop a retailing arm.

The purchasing clout to be gained from the largest chemists chain could deliver earnings enhancement of 20 per cent to UniChem over several years, illustrating that there is plenty of room for a higher cash offer from Gehe.

Bouygues

THE huge losses by Bouygues have much to do with the past, but a greater worry is the current performance of the underlying businesses. Bouygues's decision to write down the group's property assets by £1.2 billion is a welcome return to reality. The French property market is suffering from a sclerosis caused by the reluctance of large companies, mainly banks, to mark their assets down to

open market value. Unrealistic valuations have led to a dearth of buyers, and signs that Bouygues is prepared to accept the shrinking of its balance sheet might lead to honesty elsewhere.

More worrying is evidence that weakness in the French construction market appears to have hit Bouygues's construction margins; the company has hitherto been achieving a return on sales in excess of 1 per cent, a respectable performance in a largely unprofitable industry.

Bouygues is embarking on a £1.3 billion disposal programme, but there is no evidence that the construction, telecoms and media conglomerate is about to emerge or sell its stake in TFI, the French television channel. French companies like Bouygues and Générale de Banque have yet to feel the anti-conglomerate sentiment suffered by their Anglo-Saxon counterparts.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE			
COCOA			
Mar	911.90	Mar	1021.00
May	920.00	May	1030.00
Jul	930.00	Jul	1040.00
Sep	940.00	Sep	1050.00
Nov	950.00	Nov	1060.00
Jan	960.00	Jan	1070.00
Mar	970.00	Mar	1080.00
May	980.00	May	1090.00
Jul	990.00	Jul	1100.00
Sep	1000.00	Sep	1110.00
Nov	1010.00	Nov	1120.00
Jan	1020.00	Jan	1130.00
Mar	1030.00	Mar	1140.00
May	1040.00	May	1150.00
Jul	1050.00	Jul	1160.00
Sep	1060.00	Sep	1170.00
Nov	1070.00	Nov	1180.00
Jan	1080.00	Jan	1190.00
Mar	1090.00	Mar	1200.00
May	1100.00	May	1210.00
Jul	1110.00	Jul	1220.00
Sep	1120.00	Sep	1230.00
Nov	1130.00	Nov	1240.00
Jan	1140.00	Jan	1250.00
Mar	1150.00	Mar	1260.00
May	1160.00	May	1270.00
Jul	1170.00	Jul	1280.00
Sep	1180.00	Sep	1290.00
Nov	1190.00	Nov	1300.00
Jan	1200.00	Jan	1310.00
Mar	1210.00	Mar	1320.00
May	1220.00	May	1330.00
Jul	1230.00	Jul	1340.00
Sep	1240.00	Sep	1350.00
Nov	1250.00	Nov	1360.00
Jan	1260.00	Jan	1370.00
Mar	1270.00	Mar	1380.00
May	1280.00	May	1390.00
Jul	1290.00	Jul	1400.00
Sep	1300.00	Sep	1410.00
Nov	1310.00	Nov	1420.00
Jan	1320.00	Jan	1430.00
Mar	1330.00	Mar	1440.00
May	1340.00	May	1450.00
Jul	1350.00	Jul	1460.00
Sep	1360.00	Sep	1470.00
Nov	1370.00	Nov	1480.00
Jan	1380.00	Jan	1490.00
Mar	1390.00	Mar	1500.00
May	1400.00	May	1510.00
Jul	1410.00	Jul	1520.00
Sep	1420.00	Sep	1530.00
Nov	1430.00	Nov	1540.00
Jan	1440.00	Jan	1550.00
Mar	1450.00	Mar	1560.00
May	1460.00	May	1570.00
Jul	1470.00	Jul	1580.00
Sep	1480.00	Sep	1590.00
Nov	1490.00	Nov	1600.00
Jan	1500.00	Jan	1610.00
Mar	1510.00	Mar	1620.00
May	1520.00	May	1630.00
Jul	1530.00	Jul	1640.00
Sep	1540.00	Sep	1650.00
Nov	1550.00	Nov	1660.00
Jan	1560.00	Jan	1670.00
Mar	1570.00	Mar	1680.00
May	1580.00	May	1690.00
Jul	1590.00	Jul	1700.00
Sep	1600.00	Sep	1710.00
Nov	1610.00	Nov	1720.00
Jan	1620.00	Jan	1730.00

Why monetary union is everyone else's problem

Growth and votes matter more than Maastricht to Germany, writes Janet Bush

THE TIMES
CITY DIARY

Red Arrows ground Owen

HERE'S initiative for you. Hilary Owen, a management consultant, didn't lock herself in some dimly lit library doing research for her book, *Creating Top Flight* (Thames, (Kogan Page, £16.95), which is published tomorrow.

The book is about team effort — so what finer case study than the disciplined team work of the RAF Red Arrows?

Owen, whose hobbies include flying, golf and playing the piano — "but not all at the same time" — hitched herself to the squadron for two years, and did virtually everything in order to understand their motivation — except take to the skies.

At 74 stone, she was apparently too light for the Red Arrows to ensure her a safe flight, although she has been promised a trip in another jet. For her next treat, she could try Bomber Command.

End game
OUCH! My professional heart goes out to the author whose book on *Hanson*, which was finished in 1994, is due to be serialised in the launch issue of *Sunday Business*. After Hanson's decision yesterday to split itself into four, some serious rewriting of the end is being called for.

READERS' suggestions (*City Diary*, January 26) to help Hanson to name a new town include: *Peterborough* or *Southern* *Hanson* — or *Postle* *Jimsille*, *White's Manor* and *Gardonsdown*.



"Right — when do we start taking each other over?"

Foreign tongues

NEVER let it be said the British are totally inadequate at foreign tongues. The London Insurance and Reinsurance Market Association, is lending its support to the creation of two new language clubs that encourage the wider use of foreign languages. About 300 workers in the London market are members of the London Market Language Club, which already caters for French and German. Now Italian and Spanish can be added to the list.

Absent guest

KENNETH CLARKE, the Chancellor, will not be packing his brown shoes for this year's path-racing of the World Economic Forum at Davos. The forum, by reputation the exclusive think-tank, starts tomorrow and runs until February 6. Clarke, somewhat nervous of economic experts when he first arrived at Number 11, seemed to thrive on previous Davos visits. So why has he turned down his invitation this year? Pressure of his not surprising trip to touring for business in Latin America.

This year, the British standard will be carried by, among others, Howard Davies, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, Anthony Nelson, the Trade Minister, and Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary. The latter may seem a strange choice at an economics forum, but the forum reserves the right to choose its exclusive guests.

COLIN CAMPBELL

German policymakers are working on two timetables. There is, of course, the timetable enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty, leading to monetary union by January 1, 1999. And then there is the timetable set by German federal elections in 1998. We hear so much about the first, but it is infinitely less important than the second.

Only two weeks ago, Theo Waigel, Germany's Finance Minister, said the 13-year ruling coalition with the Free Democrat Party would collapse if FDP members insisted on pushing for a reduction in the solidarity surcharge on income taxes imposed to finance the reconstruction of East Germany. Yesterday, Herr Waigel announced the said tax cut, trimming the rate to 55 per cent from its current level of 7.5 per cent when it starts in July next year.

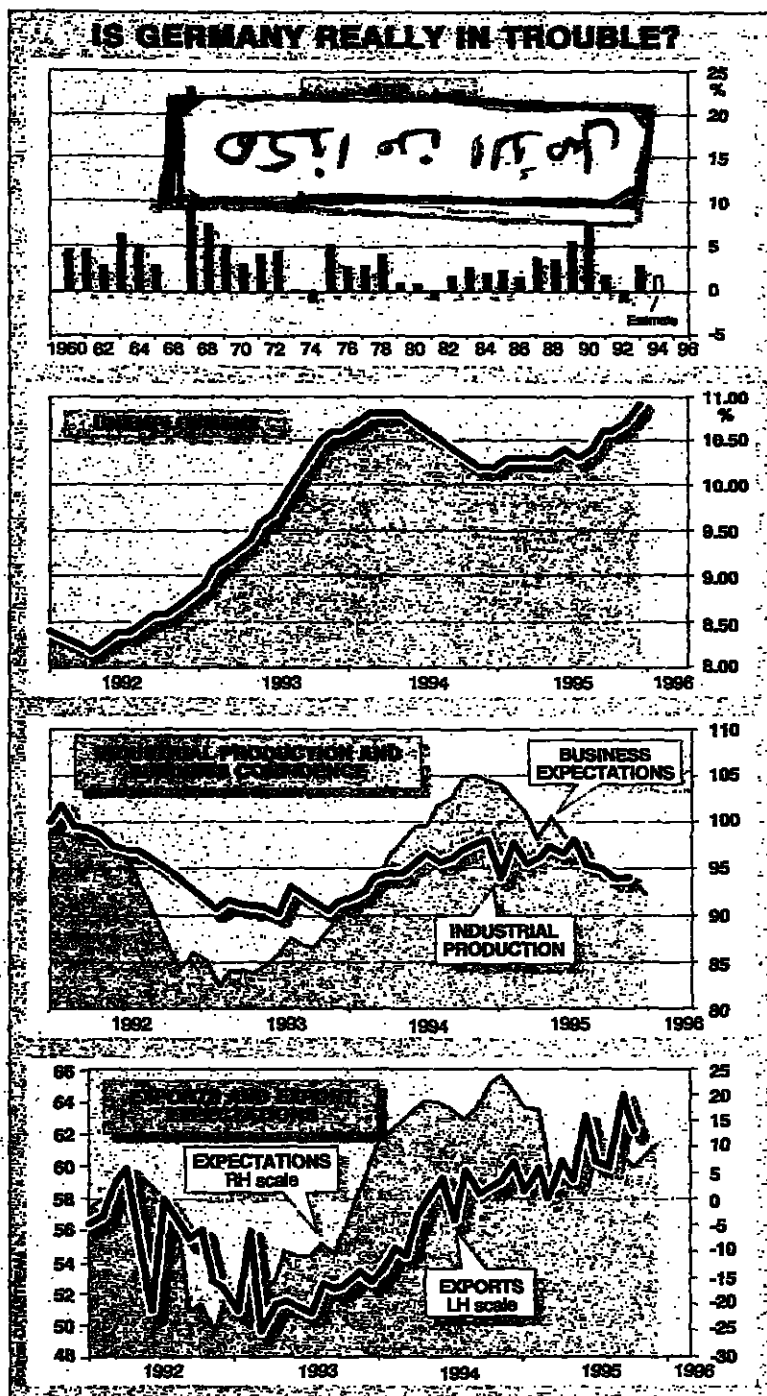
So, Chancellor Kohl's out-of-favour junior partner now has a chance of winning some votes in three key state elections to take place in March and, presumably, the coalition survives to fight another day. What the cut in the solidarity tax clearly does not point to is a concerted effort to reduce Germany's budget deficit in order to meet the Maastricht criteria on debt.

It was only on January 12 that the nation indulged in collective hand-wringing when the Government admitted that its federal deficit for 1995 had overshoot to 3.6 per cent of GDP, missing the Maastricht deficit criterion by a wide margin. Yesterday, the latest official forecast said the deficit would remain at about 3.5 per cent this year as well.

Once the markets rather gleefully got wind of the fact that even Germany, the anchor of the EMU experiment, was unlikely to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria, confidence in the whole process drained away with remarkable speed. So, in a show of solidarity with its French partners, who have already had to endure damaging nationwide strikes and political turmoil, surely Germany would come up with a package designed to get the public finances back on track?

Well, yes, and no. Germany yesterday unveiled a package supposedly aimed at stimulating growth and creating jobs. The need for such measures was underlined by the new forecast downgrading growth to a meagre 1.5 per cent this year, against previous estimates of between 2 and 2.5 per cent. Unemployment is expected to rise further. Yesterday, there was news of a real 10 per cent drop in engineering orders in December compared with a year ago.

The logic is that, without more growth, the deficit will not even remain stable but rise over the coming year, a desperate conundrum facing many an aspiring member of the euro club. But the initial reaction of economists to yesterday's offering from Bonn was that the package — which includes measures to cut supplementary wage costs, including social security contributions, to privatised state-owned companies, to



reduce corporate taxes and to facilitate the setting up of new companies — will, if anything, worsen the fiscal arithmetic and fail to stimulate growth.

Herr Waigel predictably put the stimulatory measures in the context of EMU, saying that he would do everything that was needed to meet the Maastricht criteria. But this is bunkum in anything but rhetorical fancy and Germany's leaders — whether in Bonn or Frankfurt — know it. The reality is that, if Maastricht ever goes ahead, it will be on Germany's terms. If Germany wants to ease the targets, it will. If it wants to delay until others are fit for membership, it will continue to insist, as now, that the Maastricht criteria are strictly interpreted.

Germany's domestic economic prospects and problems are paramount and these are actually untouched by the EMU debate except in one important respect. It is only a residual belief that EMU may go ahead which is preventing the mark from soaring to even more damagingly overvalued levels.

This is obvious from the reaction of investors to last week's wobbles on the EMU front which saw money pouring into the mark but on a relatively limited scale.

Just try to imagine the amount of money which would be invested in marks if Europe's leaders admit that the Maastricht timetable will have to be abandoned. This is why almost every member of the Bundesbank council has been emphasising the importance of EMU in recent days, even though everyone knows they do not want it to happen.

Germany must avoid further appreciation in the mark at all costs for it is the main reason the economy has been shuddering to near a halt. This is the most compelling reason for vociferous Bundesbank support for EMU recently, although everyone knows it doesn't really want it to happen. However, it is difficult to see how Germany can escape its strong currency trap.

A substantially stronger dollar against the mark-bloc would be one

answer and yet German officials have never admitted that they might want the mark to fall sharply. Last year, when Japan was going all out to reverse the yen's rise against the US currency, Germany stood by and said it was a US problem for the US to tackle. At the recent Group of Seven meeting in Paris, the accent was again on the dollar/yen, with German officials shy about expressing their concerns about the mark.

It is increasingly ironic that Germany has always blamed the US budget deficit for dollar weakness and yet its own, emerging budget weaknesses are, if anything, strengthening the mark. This may seem like topsy-turvy economic logic, but anything which makes EMU less likely — and Germany missing fiscal targets is a prime candidate — will simply attract more money into marks. Lower interest rates are not likely to help either.

When Bundesbank officials recently signalled that they wanted to drive the repurchase rate lower, the mark strengthened because money was pulled into German bonds.

One way to soften the mark and its satellites against the dollar would be to stick to the Maastricht process rigidly and cause outright recession in Europe, but no German politician looking to re-election will want to countenance that.

Another would be for the Bundesbank to take its cue from the Bank of Japan which insistently talked the yen lower and backed up the rhetoric with massive yen sales in the currency markets. But it is scarcely conceivable that the Bundesbank would consider such a radical change to its *modus operandi* — after all, it is still insisting on leaving official rates unchanged on money supply grounds, even as the economy apparently stagnates.

At 3 a.m., the Bundesbank operates a policy of using interest rates as a stick to beat the politicians. They have been put under consistent pressure to cut the deficit and overcome the country's propensity to pay itself over the odds, but Bonn has failed on both counts.

There is little confidence in any of its measures on the fiscal front. And its perennial refuge in solidarity pacts between Government, employers and unions to keep wage costs down is sheepishly mild and fanciful in a country where, just yesterday, the building union demanded a 5 per cent wage rise. It hardly speaks of an understanding of the competitive pressures Germany undoubtedly faces that IG Metall, Germany's biggest union, believes it is being radically helpful to ask for a freeze, not even of nominal wages but real wages, and still ask for the creation of 110,000 new jobs in return.

Our own Chancellor yesterday took the opportunity to crow about Europe's problems, calling on them to emulate Britain's attack on uncompetitive forces such as trade unions. Yet, in his belly, he must look at Germany and weep with envy. For most economists believe that Germany will levitate its way out of trouble without any of the nasty fiscal medicine or often painful supply side reform Britain has administered. Germany's leaders may be a little embarrassed at the inauspicious economic circumstances of the moment, but the tinkering of policy at the margin hardly speaks of a fundamental loss of confidence in Germany's power to bounce back.

Can Japan rescue the dying EMU?

The impossible, like the man said, takes a little longer. Bonn still grows EMU slogans through gritted teeth and backs them with unpopular measures; but its would-be partners confine themselves to slogans. In any case, the real issue is not one of political will, but of arithmetic. Trying to drive the fiscal deficit in an already depressed economy is the equivalent of trying to get out of a hole by digging it deeper — not, as Denis Healey once pointed out, the recommended route.

Indeed, most detached observers who have done the sums regard the task as virtually impossible. Impossible? Well, impossible in France, which amounts to the same thing. Brian Reading, of Lombard Street Research, has calculated the scale of the obstacle. French convergence by 1997 would mean reducing their structural budget deficit by 4.6 per cent of GDP, on top of the 1.6 per cent cut already in the pipeline (a pipeline is vulnerable to attacks by the unions). These measures would reduce GDP by 6.9 per cent below its short-term potential. This might be possible in a strong economy, but not in a weak one. Wait a minute, though: isn't this just like the arguments we heard in Britain in 1981? As Reading reminds us, 365 leading economists wrote a joint letter of protest when Geoffrey Howe's second Budget imposed higher taxes on a depressed economy. They warned of a depression to come; instead, we had an immediate recovery. Yes, says Reading, but that trick can be worked only with a floating exchange rate.

If you can balance tight fiscal with easy monetary policy and so achieve a devaluation and an investment boom, the sums add up. It worked for us in 1981, and has worked for the Americans in the past five years. France, as a member of the ERM, cannot take this route. Fiscal policy may be made in Paris, but monetary policy is set in Bonn. Only the Bundesbank, then, can rescue the French; and it is constitutionally bound to give prime weight to German, not French, conditions. It will make the interest rate cuts the French need only if the new German recession proves a great deal worse than now looks likely. And if that happened, the Germans would miss the Maastricht targets.

Can the Euro-enthusiasts suspend the laws of arithmetic? Up to a point. The Maastricht treaty insists on low inflation and stable exchange rates, but does not call for immutable fiscal numbers. It would be satisfied by

"satisfactory progress" and allow for "exceptional circumstances": plenty of scope, in short, for a fudge. A fudge lobby, calling for "flexible" interpretation, is emerging in France, and in some German quarters.

But fudge-making can be a dangerous trade. Mark-loving German voters, not to mention international bond traders, are suspicious folk: faced with a relaxation of the Maastricht criteria, they could well provoke a political crisis, or a market problem. Any fudging is likely to be subtle and modest. Similar pitfalls, only deeper, are to be found on the other favourite "escape route": an ERM realignment. This would push up the mark, thus deepening Helmut Kohl's domestic problems; and it would provoke a market crisis for the franc. This would be a measure of despair.

The traditional way to stave off a European crisis is making time for a solution. This is now openly favoured by some French leaders. But delay too is a crisis-prone. It would certainly be read in the markets as a confession of defeat; bond prices would fall, interest rates would rise, and the problems of EMU would get worse. No hope at all, then? Or, from a British point of view, nothing to fear?

Not necessarily. There remains the case for Helmut Micawber, aware of his problems, but still hoping something will turn up. What could plausibly turn up is the dollar — indeed, it has begun to do so; and with it, the demand for European exports. In this ideal scenario, growth in Europe turns up and deficits come down without anyone on this side of the Atlantic having to do anything. EMU ex machina. The odds? Not as long as you might think, to judge by what was, until not long ago, a closely watched economic indicator: money growth. Broad money growth has begun unaccountably to accelerate in the US and Britain, and narrow money growth in Japan is now setting non-inflationary records.

The cause is to be found in Tokyo, where money is being created in an effort to bail out the banks and achieve a yen correction; but the effect on the Japanese economy is so far modest. Abroad, however, it is more dramatic daily new records on Wall Street, super-cheap yen-denominated loans for commercial borrowers. This could prove the final irony of the story of the EMU, a device that threatens to divide Europe in the cause of unity: to be validated not by Europe's own efforts, but by the desperation of the once-feared Japanese.

Philip Bassett examines a fierce political battleground

Parties woo business community

The mingling of business with politics continues apace as the general election gets closer. Today, both parties will be back on the business trail, with Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, addressing the CBI's governing council, while a range of business figures — led by Sir Terence Conran — boost Labour's launch of six task groups on business policy.

Of the two, business may get least from the more direct contact between Mr Rifkind and the CBI. The Foreign Secretary is set to talk about the Government's vision for Europe before this year's inter-governmental conferences, having earlier this week ratcheted up increased Tory Euro-scepticism by casting doubts on the credibility of a single currency by 1999.

Given the imminence of the Government's White Paper on Europe, and the political sensitivity of the issue as a continuing faultline for the Conservatives, business leaders are not expecting much from Mr Rifkind. However, he will certainly be further along the Euro spectrum than the Chancellor was yesterday in his robust defence of the prevailing economic conditions in the UK before the planned single currency trigger.

Some ministers took last week's remarks on pay, by Adair Turner, the CBI Director-General, as fresh evidence of the business community's growing dalliance with Labour — and today's launch of six business task groups by Labour's Industry Forum will be viewed as a further development of that.



Margaret Beckett launches Labour's task groups, while Malcolm Rifkind talks to the CBI



Margaret Beckett launches Labour's task groups, while Malcolm Rifkind talks to the CBI

means by which business, industry and the City can have a constructive dialogue with Labour, the Industry Forum is a largely unsung success, with about 150 companies or leading business individuals now taking part.

Led by Gerald Frankel, an industrialist who founded Britain's first microfilm equipment manufacturing company, the Forum provides a discreet opportunity for business contact with Labour. As a recent City analysis of Labour's business policies puts it: "Many companies which do not wish to be seen to donate to, or associate with, the party find that the Forum meets some of their need for a face-to-face discussion with Labour."

Set up three years ago as a

sign of how much business wants and needs to know about Labour is the fact that among the Forum's most recent signatories is the Institute of Directors, whose agreement to join caused some astonishment — but was warmly welcomed — at the Forum.

Established by Margaret Beckett when she was Labour's deputy leader, the Forum will today open its latest dialogue with the first full meeting of one of its industry task groups. Serving on its innovation, design, science and technology group will be Sir Terence Conran, along with Robin Pears, director of science policy at Smithkline Beecham, David Allen, marketing director at Digital Equipment, and a clutch of Labour MPs.

Similar business figures are

mentations from the Commission on Public Policy and British Business — launched by the Blairite Institute for Public Policy Research — due later this year, the findings of the Industry Forum task groups will be central to the new business policy statement which Mrs Beckett will draw up and which Labour will take to its party conference.

Mr Blair's notion of a stakeholder economy will be its overarching context, but within that, Labour is already developing a range of new policy which would alter the framework for business if it is voted in at the next election.

Planned reforms include a new companies bill on corporate governance; a detailed reconsideration of competition policy; a new regulatory body for the City; new plans on investment, including the adoption of the CBI's proposal for a two-tier capital gains tax to promote longer-term shareholding as well as other corporate tax reforms; and a range of training and employment measures.

Some of that detail is already in place; the work of the Forum's task groups will flesh it out. For business, where the divide over Europe is apparent, if not quite as sharp in the Conservative party, what the Conservative Government does about Europe, EMU and the IGC is of immediate importance — so Mr Rifkind's speech today will be studied closely. But with a general election approaching, Labour's plans for business will require business leaders to also keep a close watch on what is happening on the other side of the political fence.

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\$5,000 - \$9,999	3.85	2.95
\$10,000 - \$24,999	4.35	3.25
\$25,000 and OVER	4.75	3.55
Paid up shares	1.40	1.25

Closed Accounts	Old Rate	New Rate
Premium Shares	3.55	2.85
Cash Share Interest	3.55	2.85
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TESSA 94		
TESSA 94	6.75	Tax Exempt

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Where Castles In The Air Take Shape

Study finds cost impact of equalising part-timers' rights is marginal Jobs 'safe' under equal-pay regime

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

PART-TIME workers' pay could rise by up to 10 per cent if they are given equal rights with full-timers, while the impact on Britain's wage bill and jobs would be marginal, a new study suggests.

The analysis by the independent Policy Studies Institute, published yesterday, is the first sustained attempt to estimate the economic impact of Labour's declared policy of the equalisation of employment rights for Britain's 5.4 million

part-time employees. Government ministers insist that giving part-timers the same employment conditions as full-time workers will push up costs to business, leading either to price rises or compensating job cuts.

But the new study, commissioned from the PSI by the Trades Union Congress, denies that equalisation would cut Britain's competitiveness or reduce jobs, and says that it would "bring quite substantial

improvements in the wages and fringe benefits of part-timers at relatively little cost to employers".

Using detailed UK and European survey data, the study, *Value for Money*, suggests that pro rata equalisation of part-timers' pay would add, on average, 51p an hour to part-timers' current average pay of £4.89 — a rise of 10 per cent for them, and an increase of 0.6 per cent in employers' costs.

The difference rests on the fact that most part-timers are employed in low-paid jobs, and in the number of hours they work — an average of 18 a week, compared to the 42 hours of full-timers.

Employers might be able to recoup some of these costs in productivity gains, the study suggests, since it shows that there are considerable cost advantages in part-time work, including high productivity, low turnover and low absent-

teism, as well as improvements in product quality.

The report says that most companies believe that part-time work makes their firms more competitive.

A labour cost increase of about 0.5 per cent on the country's wage bill, currently estimated at about £350 billion annually, would have a "broadly neutral" effect on employment.

The TUC is to use the findings as part of a cam-

paign, to be launched next week with Britain's Citizens Advice Bureaux, to win equal rights for part-time workers.

John Monks, General Secretary of the TUC, said yesterday: "Giving equal rights would be a boost to part-timers, and to business. The Government and employers should see sense and end double standards in the workplace. Part-time workers are good value for money and deserve fair treatment."

Negative equity burden weighs heavy in the North West

By Sara McConnell

MORE than 50 per cent of borrowers in the North West who took out mortgages between 1992 and 1994 now have mortgages worth more than the value of their property, a report from the Nationwide Building Society has revealed.

These new negative equity victims helped to push the total number of households in negative equity up to 1.7 million, or 10 per cent of all owner-occupier households, Britain's second largest society

said. This figure is substantially higher than the 1.16 million estimated earlier this month by the Woolwich Building Society.

More bad news is expected today when the Council of Mortgage Lenders announces that 25,000 households have had their homes repossessed in the last six months, bringing the yearly total up to about 50,000. The CML predicts that repossessions will stay at this level until the housing market picks up, or the Government intervenes.

Nationwide's findings, published in its quarterly *Housing Finance Review*, show that price falls in the North West during 1995 shifted the burden of negative equity away from the South East. The Nationwide said: "Whereas nearly 60 per cent of all negative equity cases were to be found in the four southern regions (Greater London, South East, South West and East Anglia) the figure has fallen to just over 50 per cent at the end of 1995."

But the increase in numbers of victims masks a fall in the total value of negative equity outstanding, from £8.6 billion to £8.3 billion. The average shortfall was reduced from £5,600 to £4,900, with householders in the four southern regions facing average debts of £7,200, down from £7,800 at the end of 1994.

The Nationwide says that the rise in the number of households in negative equity "is the result of relatively small falls in house prices, particularly during the third quarter, and its significance for individual households should not be exaggerated".

No final dividend from QS

QS HOLDINGS, the discount fashion retailer, told shareholders that it will not pay a final dividend after managing only to break even in the second half of the financial year (Martin Barrow writes).

The company, which incurred losses of £743,000 before tax in the first half, said that an improvement in sales in December, assisted by a record week before Christmas, had not been enough to offset disappointing autumn trading. In December, like-for-like sales rose 0.5 per cent.

John Coleman is joining the board of QS as a non-executive director. Mr Coleman, 43, was formerly managing director of Texas Homecare from September 1993 until its takeover by J Sainsbury.



Harry Lambert, head of Adscene, is pleased with a 4 per cent increase in advertising and is paying more at halfway

Takeovers lift Adscene

By Martin Barrow

ACQUISITIONS, improved advertising revenue and stable newspaper prices helped to lift the half-year earnings of Adscene, the printing and local newspapers group.

During the six months to November 25 last year, the group, based in Canterbury, Kent, pushed up pre-tax profits to £2.7 million, from £2.1 million in the corresponding period in 1994. The interim is lifted 0.5p to 3.5p on earnings per share of 9.9p (8.6p).

Adscene enjoyed a full contribution from Flair Press, its

commercial printing operation, which performed better than forecast at the time of the acquisition in November, 1994.

After the acquisition of EMAP's Kent papers, the Tamworth Herald Group and The Lichfield Mercury Group in December, Adscene now publishes 82 titles with a total circulation of 1.75 million copies a week.

Harry Lambert, chairman and chief executive, said December and January were traditionally the quietest

months and did not give a reliable indication of the outcome for the full year. "Nevertheless, we anticipate considerable opportunities presenting themselves in our publishing operations, which will positively affect our financial performance and mix of business. The stabilisation of newspaper costs, together with the benefits of the recent acquisitions, enable us to look forward to another good year." Overall advertising revenue increased by 4 per cent during the half-year.

Samsung says 'no' to Fokker

Samsung, South Korea's vast industrial group, yesterday dampened optimism that it could emerge as an Asian saviour for Fokker, the troubled Dutch plane-maker.

Park Chung-hyun, a spokesman for Samsung Aerospace, a subsidiary of Samsung Group, said his company had no specific plan to buy Fokker. "Our company is keen to expand into the aerospace business but we are not approaching Fokker with an intention to take it over."

Hopes that Samsung could inject cash needed to stop a collapse sent Fokker shares soaring on Monday by over a third to 4.30 guilders in Amsterdam. But analysts brushed aside talk that Samsung would buy Fokker's aircraft-making units, ditched by Daimler-Benz of Germany, a large shareholder.

On Monday, Samsung Motor, the group's fledgling automotive arm, said it would invest \$13 billion in a bid to become a global top ten vehicle-maker by the year 2010.

IAF cash call

IAF Group, the asset finance and management company, is raising £6 million through a rights issue to fund expansion. It is offering two new shares for every three held at 10p. Existing shares fell 1p to 144p yesterday. IAF reported a decline in pre-tax profits to £601,000 (£754,000) for the half year to December 31 on turnover of £3.5 million (£4 million). Earnings were 0.5p a share (0.62p). The interim dividend rises to 0.25p (0.2p).

Jones warning

Jones Group, the manufacturing and shipping company based in Dublin, warned shareholders that its 1995 results would be sharply lower than expected. Trading conditions had worsened in the second half, partly because mild weather had affected its energy distribution businesses and partly because further decline in the construction industry had hit its radiator division.

KLM on line

KLM, the Dutch airline, said it was on target for a 10 per cent increase in annual profits after achieving a 23 per cent increase in third-quarter earnings to 102 million guilders (£40.8 million) from 83 million in the third quarter of the previous year.

When the auditor opens up its books

KPMG's report and accounts is the first of its kind, Robert Bruce finds

Usually it is the auditor who asks the questions. Today all that will change. KPMG, the accountancy firm, has published a report and accounts for the first time, and copies should be landing on clients' desks. All KPMG partners have a prepared question and answer sheet, as they await the finance director's questions.

So what will clients learn from the document? It looks as glossy and well-prepared as their own. It contains a senior partner's statement that conveys the same blend of plaudits and problems as their chairman's statements. The real difference is that there is no statement from the auditors and nothing for the shareholders.

Of course, all the shareholders are the partners. They received their copies yesterday, and there are no reports of revolution in the corridors. After all, fees were up 6.8 per cent to £588.8 million. Partnership income was maintained but what the report calls "proprietary profit" was

The figures show just how well senior accountants are doing?

mention of the all-powerful "general partnership" at the heart of the firm. These 33 people comprise the holding company. There is no reference to its existence in the report and accounts.

There was always going to be a difficulty in showing a complex partnership structure and figures in a corporate style. As one ex-KPMG partner put it: "The figures have been massaged into that presentation, and the pensions have been separated out as a way of reducing the amounts shown as other remuneration."

Some 428 partners out of the 586 are shown in bandings between £75,000 and £175,000. When you consider that for a true earnings figure you have to add on half again for pensions and proprietorship profit, it comes to a huge number of very well-paid partners.

Mr Sharman remains in fighting mood. He refers you to investment banks, where a much higher proportion of staff earn more than £100,000. He insists that to compete, particularly in the City, it needs to pay highly. "We are still losing partners we need to keep."

The figures show just how well senior accountants are doing. London and the South East region contribute 63 per cent of KPMG's profit. There are 294 partners in the region. Add in the other Big Six firms and you have some 1,400 partners earning significant amounts in the London area.

Clients demand openness, is the KPMG cry, and certainly many of the 50,000 copies printed will back up new business pitches.

Apart from the lack of an auditor's certificate, which will be rectified next year, there is little for accountants to complain about. Under SSA22A, the firm should have provided for annuities to former partners, said one technical expert. And praise was lavished on the firm's treatment of provisions made for surplus space.

But in the end, it is the wider issues that count. This is the first report and accounts that a big accountancy firm has produced. More will follow in spite of denials from all the other firms, except Ernst & Young. The genre, in the pugnacious and bulky form of Mr Sharman, is out of the bottle.



Colin Sharman insists KPMG is hiding nothing

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THE TIMES

Qantas braced for new wave of union action

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

QANTAS, the Australian airline in which British Airways holds a 25 per cent stake, is bracing itself for a new wave of industrial action as it attempts to push through its A\$1 billion (£495 million) cost-cutting programme.

The airline has already been hit by a series of one-day strikes and walkouts in protest over changes to staff payments and allowances, and analysts warn that further industrial unrest could seriously damage confidence in Qantas shares, which are currently trading just 25 cents higher than their \$2 price when the company was floated six months ago.

One Sydney-based aviation analyst warned: "We will see an ongoing rash of these pin-pricks of strike action. These are warning shots being fired by the unions across Qantas management's bows not to take them for granted."

"Qantas is one of Australia's most heavily unionised companies, with more than 90 per cent of its employees a member of a union, compared to less than 40 per cent union membership for the workforce as a whole."

A key element of Qantas's cost-cutting programme, which is targeted to cut \$1 billion from the airline's \$6.7 billion cost base over the next three years, is its Joint Services Agreement with BA, which provides for combined purchasing and scheduling arrangements.

Qantas is also in the process of introducing BA's yield management system into its opera-

tions to improve efficiency. However, James Strong, chief executive, warned that there will be no let-up in the cost-cutting programme, saying: "Hard decisions have to be made and the cost-cutting just has to be done. There is no alternative. Otherwise, Qantas has no future in terms of its competitiveness."

Mr Strong also cautioned Qantas employees against "unnecessarily wasting their own income by over-reacting to these things". He added: "We will do it in the least

disruptive way we can. We are committed to a process designed to avoid disruption."

Analysts said that any escalation of industrial action could jeopardise Qantas's ability to meet its forecast net profit of \$257 million for the year to June 1996, up from \$180 million the year before.

"They don't need any distraction at all to get that \$257 million," said one analyst. Qantas is expected to unveil profits of between \$135 million and \$145 million next month for the half-year to December 1995, up from \$129 million for the comparable period the previous year.



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■ OPERA

A great heritage in ashes: from the famous first night of Verdi's *La traviata*...



■ OPERA

...to the premiere of Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress*: La Fenice has a unique history

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ THEATRE 1

Intoxicating stuff: pints and prizes all round for the virtuosos of pub theatre



■ THEATRE 2

Two Trains Running is August Wilson's latest portrayal of life among Afro-Americans

'Every inch was resonant with history'

As Venice surveys the ashes of its opera house, Rodney Milnes recalls La Fenice's glittering triumphs.

For anyone even remotely involved in opera, it is as if a close member of the family had suddenly departed. Apart from being simply one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, La Fenice was at the centre of operatic endeavour for two centuries from 1792 and, though vicariously, for nearly two centuries before.

As a building, there was the tension between, on the one hand, the severe Napoleonic exterior and the chaste Neo-Classical reception rooms; and on the other the riotous late rococo auditorium, lovingly restored after the first fire of 1836 and a fantasy of cream and gilt plasterwork. Like all the best rococo it should, by all accepted canons of taste (well, English taste anyway), have been deemed over-the-top and vulgar, but was in fact the most fastidious and exquisite of designs.

To sit in the stalls, or in the gallery looking down on such splendour, or in one of the cosy, curiously louche boxes, was a Venetian pleasure as essential as visiting the Accademia or the Basilica. The grand ceremonial entrance was in fact at the back of the theatre, on the canal. Dark, eerie, silent save for lapping waves, it was at night one of the most romantic and atmospheric spots in the whole city.

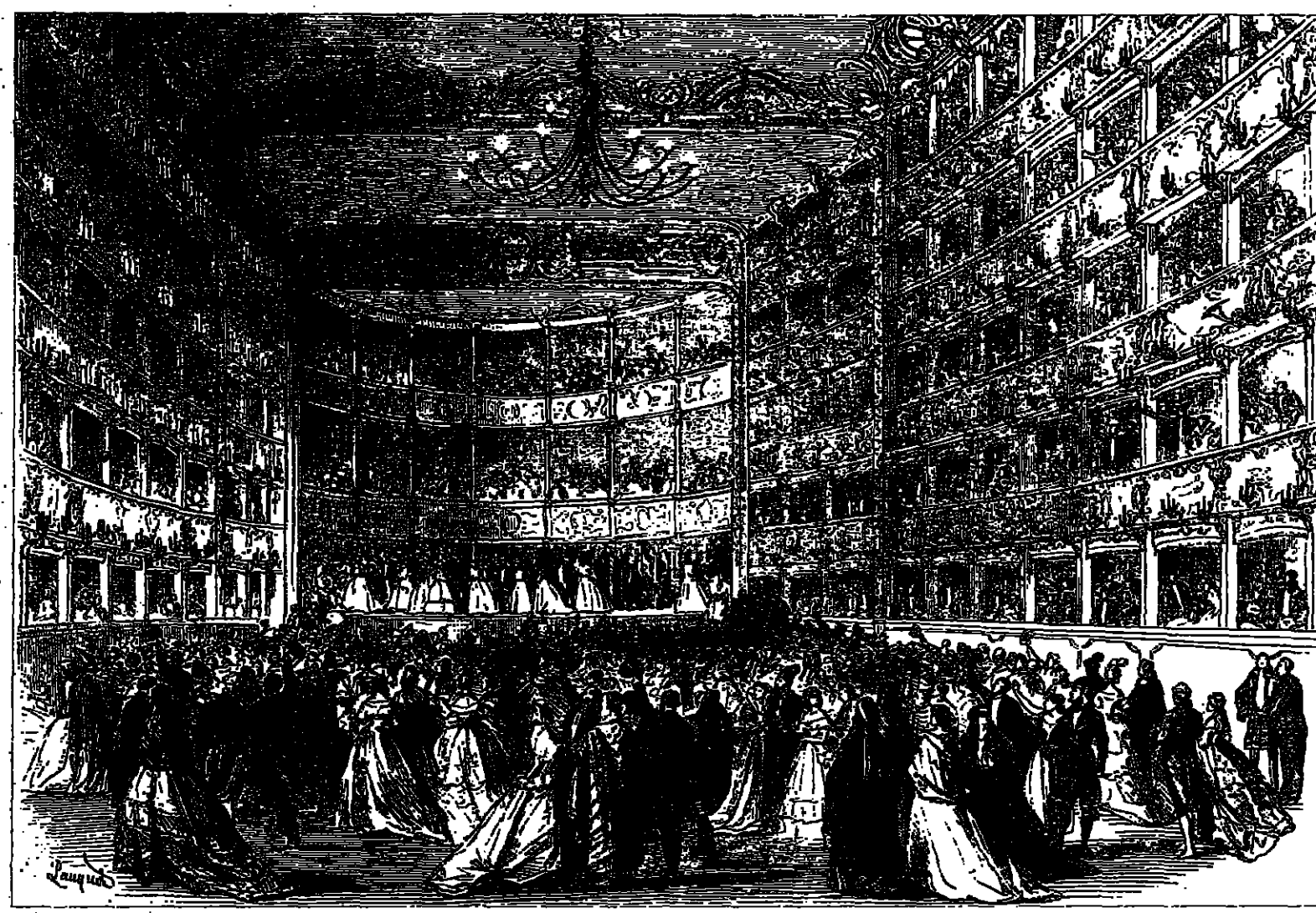
The Fenice acoustics, based on the soft wood that must ironically have aided Monday's tragedy, were superb. Quite honestly, I never heard an exceptional performance there but it didn't matter; just to be in that theatre was enough. Every inch of it was resonant with operatic history. Opera may have been 'invented' in Florence, but it was in Venice that the form developed and flourished throughout the 1600s. At one time there were an incredible 13 public opera houses in the city.

Great nights of the phoenix

1792: New theatre, designed by Antonio Selva, opens in Venice. Called La Fenice (the phoenix) because it belatedly replaces a theatre burnt down 18 years earlier.
1813: Rossini puts La Fenice on the map with the premiere of *Tancredi*. Subsequent premieres include Rossini's *Semiramide* (1823), Bellini's *Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1830), Donizetti's *Belisario* (1836).
1836: La Fenice destroyed by fire again. Giambattista and Tommaso Meduna rebuild, following Selva's original ground-plan. Reopens Boxing Day, 1837.
1844: Verdi's first Venice premiere, *Ernani*, followed by *Attila* (1846), *Rigoletto* (1851), *La traviata* (1853), *Simon Boccanegra* (1857).
1951: Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress* premiered.
1954: Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*.
1955: Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel*.

and audiences flocked to hear new works just as fast as composers could turn them out. Monteverdi's *Poppea*, Arianna, Cavalli (pick any one of 40 titles), Legrenzi, right up to Handel, whose early masterpiece *Agrippina* (1709) was first heard in Venice.

But it was with the decline or destruction of the smaller theatres that the Fenice came to dominate the city, and its greatest hours arrived. The list of premieres that took place there is dazzling. It started with Rossini's first important opera seria, *Tancredi*, one of the most important and influ-



One of the golden periods in Venice's operatic life: an engraving showing a masked ball held inside the Teatro La Fenice in the mid-19th century

ential of his works, and ten years later *Semiramide*, that *Hannibal* of 19th-century opera, only now returning to the standard repertoire. Bellini wrote for the Fenice (*Capuleti e i Montecchi*, his *Romeo and Juliet* opera) and so, frequently, did Donizetti, most notably with *Belisario*. But it was on its association with Verdi that La Fenice's greatest claim to fame rests. *Ernani* was a key early piece: Victor Hugo-style, no-holds-barred melodrama set to music. I would give anything to have been at the premiere of *Attila*: the opera was partly set

in what was to become Venice, and the rumbustious tenor cabaletta with its vision of a city rising like a phoenix from the lagoon must have roused the Risorgimento audience to a frenzy of patriotic fervour. Verdi fought well-documented battles with the local censors over *Rigoletto*; at first sight their complaints at the opera's obscenity look bizarre, but viewed from a post-Freudian perspective they were perhaps not as stupid as they seemed. Nevertheless, it was at La Fenice that one of the mainstays of the operatic repertoire was born.

Then came two famous failures. The reception of *La traviata* was not helped by the healthily built soprano singing the consumptive Violetta, and the censors took the zing out of this contemporary social-realist opera by insisting on its being performed in period costume. The first night was a fiasco. "Whose fault? Mine or the singers? Time will tell," wrote the composer darkly. Time has.

The first version of *Simon Boccanegra* (1857) was thought, even by Verdi, to be too gloomy: the Milan revision has joined the repertoire, and last year's concert performances of the Fenice original during the Royal Opera's Verdi Festival showed it to be by no means as gloomy as the composer thought.

It was after the Second World War that the theatre saw a second period of astonishing operatic vitality, with the premieres of three works that have joined the repertoire. *The Rake's Progress* came in 1951; Stravinsky offered, and more significantly, sold it to several theatres, but the Fenice won. There followed *The Turn of the Screw*, the Britten connection was reinforced

The restorers of La Fenice will take heart from successful British projects

La Fenice joins a growing number of famous historic buildings that have caught fire while building works were under way. Yet in Britain, the recent fires at Hampton Court, Windsor Castle and Upark provide heartening experience of how much precise detail, and actual physical remains of fabric and ornament, can be salvaged from the fiercest inferno by modern techniques.

The key lies in careful sifting of the debris. At Upark, the National Trust — with the help of English Heritage — dug up the debris in the gutted shell, yard by yard, and placed it two to three feet deep into hundreds of standard dustbins, all carefully numbered.

Over a period of months this debris was painstakingly sifted by archaeologists, as if panning for gold. Out of it came not only pieces of chandeliers but many of the plaster ornaments made for the Georgian ceilings. And while ceilings had collapsed, remarkable amounts of the vertical surfaces survived, including wall panelling in rooms that had blazed with fire. In parts this panelling was severely charred, but elsewhere it was relatively unscathed and could simply be conserved in situ.

In the past, reconstructions such as Dresden's Semper Oper, destroyed by Allied bombs, were carried out after careful study of photographs, plans and drawings. Today, with the help of archaeology, the architects directing the restoration of burnt-out historic buildings can achieve an astonishing precision of detail.

More than that, at Upark it proved possible to incorporate a remarkable amount of original craftsmanship salvaged from the fire. In the past this would simply have been thrown away in the trauma of the post-fire clean-up. The restored interior is thus not simply a reproduction, but contains a substantial element of the original work.

At Upark a crucial part of the process was the erection of a series of large tents where salvaged items, including large timbers, could be dried out and treated, and vast jigsaws of shattered ornaments carefully pieced together. The little square in front of the Fenice, or some still larger space, may need to be commandeered by the Venetians for such a purpose.

There may also be calls for the design of a wholly modern interior, rather than a pastiche of the old. But in Venice a conservative approach is likely to hold sway. The great Campanile in St Mark's Square, which collapsed earlier this century, is a faithful copy.

There is one good aspect to the fires in Britain. Subsequent reconstructions have fostered a remarkable degree of fine craftsmanship, with the tenders being put out in small packages so that individual craftsmen, as well as large firms, can apply for the work. Happily, Italy is especially rich in the traditional craft skills that will be needed.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

MARCUS BINNEY

THEATRE: What will the winners of the Guinness awards for pub theatre do with their windfalls? Plus August Wilson's latest play

Small-beer venues get champagne treatment

The winners of the Guinness Ingenuity Awards for Pub Theatre include plays exploring the multimedia adventures of computer technicians; the world of small-time Irish gangsters; and two sisters' disenchanted homecoming — a selection which illustrates the eclectic range of drama staged for those who like a pint with their Pinter.

Twenty-five London venues submitted 42 production proposals in pursuit of five prizes of £10,000 and the chance to work in the National Theatre Studio. But the judges were so impressed by what their chairman, Genista McIntosh — executive director of the National Theatre — called the entrants' "enthusiasm and eccentricity" that Guinness agreed to provide two more awards, enlarging what was already the biggest sponsorship deal in pub theatre history.

The winning theatres and companies — the Bush, the Etcetera, Steain Industry at the Finborough Arms, the Gate, the Red Room, Top of the Town Productions at the Hen and Chickens and Quest Theatre at the Man in the Moon — received their awards from the Herlago Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, at the National last Friday. They can now prepare 30 new shows with budgets which would normally figure only in their artistic directors' dreams.

The theatres that entered the Guinness competition are rich in imagination and energy, but little else on the fringe, small is beautiful, but seldom profitable. Average seating capacity in the various basements and upstairs rooms of pub theatre is 40 to 80 (combine self-out audiences at all 25 Ingenuity venues and you would not equal a full house for *Miss Saigon* at Drury Lane) and tickets are usually £5 to £7.

Production costs (typically £4,000 for a three-week run) are rarely recouped from the box office and the majority of actors and technicians receive no wages, working instead for what is optimistically termed "profit share".

Sam Dixon, from Fringe Theatre Network, which supports the capital's pub and studio venues, says: "Pubs are the Cinderellas of London theatre because they can't afford to promote themselves properly. Some struggle along with audiences of ten — eight of whom are probably fellow actors or friends. Wisely, most

participants don't count on seeing any money."

Venues keep their heads above water by renting space to visiting companies. Ingenuity invited one in-house and one outside proposal from each entrant and many could eventually be prime candidates for help from the National Lottery "stabilisation fund" proposed by Bottomley last week. Within this shoe-string environment, the Guinness/NT sponsorship is of enormous value.

Jacqueline Quella, co-director of Quest Theatre Company, which will perform Robert Shearman's computerised black comedy, *Binary Dreamers*, at the Man in the Moon, Chelsea, in April, says: "Hiring the multimedia equipment we need will cost £8,000, so this ground-breaking production would be impossible without our award."

The same applies to the one-person play festival at the Etcetera in Camden Town. David Cottis, the theatre's literary manager, says: "There are a lot of good plays out there. Winning means I can now invite submissions knowing that we can afford to stage the festival."

Four years ago, the Etcetera's first showcase for one-person drama attracted 200 scripts, including Stephen Dinsdale's nationally acclaimed train-spotter's diary, *Anorak of Fire*. This time Cottis expects to read at least 300 new works, 20 of which will be performed over five weeks in the autumn.

"One-person plays represent the spirit and heart of the Fringe: the place to discover the unexpected, the unseen and the unknown," Cottis says. "Audience and actors share a small space, so there's a more direct theatrical experience than in the West End."

The Bush, which has helped to launch writers such as Terry Johnson and Jonathan Harvey, won with *This Lime Tree*. Bower, Conor McPherson's Irish gangster



Big plans: David Cottis, literary manager of the Etcetera

drama. Artistic director Dominic Dromgoole believes the Ingenuity scheme, which next year goes nationwide, should dispel a misconception about pub drama. "When pub theatre is talked about as a foraging house for new talent there is an implication that people work in it just because they want to get somewhere else," he says. "But that's not true. They are surrounded by people who are equally passionate and many have the best times of their lives in pub venues."

Of all the winning theatres, Ingenuity's success probably means most to the youngest. The Red Room, in Kentish Town, opened last October and, despite budgets of only

£1,000 per show, has already run into financial difficulties. Co-founder Lisa Goldman's delight at receiving an award "which will put the Red Room on the map" is even easier to appreciate when you hear of the "deal" she struck with Judy Upton, author of *Sunspots*, an account of two sisters' return to Sussex. It is one of three works that will receive their premiere at the Red Room this summer.

"When Judy agreed to write a play for us late last year, she told me she would do it in return for a chocolate bar. I immediately asked: 'A big one or a small one?'"

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

Caught in the wry

WHEN you hear that the most prosperous character in *Two Trains Running* is a mortician, you may conclude that the latest of August Wilson's forays into Afro-American history is not a hugely upbeat affair. And when Stefan Kalipha, who whispers his way through the role in stealthy style, confides that he started life as a crap-game runner, only to realise from the murders he saw that the real profits were in selling coffins — well, what could better confirm your expectations? After all, the title refers to life and death, and we have the mortician's word that the second is the more majestic.

But here is a surprise. Though the period is 1969, and the place is slum Pittsburgh, the play is warm, life-affirming and, even without its sentimental ending, not negative at all. And here's another surprise. Some of Wilson's historiography — his 1930s play *The Piano Lesson*, or *Fences*, which was set in the 1950s — has had an earnest, classroom feel. *Two Trains* is packed with wry humour.

Though oddly little is said about the inner-city riots of the late 1960s, Wilson does not minimise the problems outside the tacky diner where the play is set. Work is scarce, poverty endemic, Malcolm X dead, and only funeral-going glamorous. Folk variously look to the numbers racket or guns or fortune-tellers in their desperate attempts to outwit a system whose rewards always seem to end up in white laps.

Memphis, who owns the diner, tries to play by society's rules, only to be driven half-mad by the city's refusal to recompense him for its compulsory purchase.

As George Harris plays him, Memphis is as rich a character as Wilson has created: kindly, angry, resentful of the injustices that have dogged him, despairing and even contemptuous of his fellow blacks. But then most of the men drinking their coffee on those green plastic-and-steel stools are observed with a nice mix of generosity and tough wit. Tony Armatrading has particular fun with Sterling, a

Two Trains Running Tricycle

gauche ex-con who offers his services as a driver to the mortician, proudly recommending himself with: "I drove a getaway car once." But he and his author do not let us forget that forces inside and outside him are conspiring to suck him back to prison. At the end I wondered if Wilson wasn't fobbing us off with too much positive thinking and mandatory hopefulness. But the play as a whole is balanced and scepticism never far away, not least when Alan Cooke, playing a bum known only as Hambone, is on stage. In 1959 he was cheated of the chunk of pig promised him for painting a fence. Ever since he has done nothing but blunder about obsessively yelling: "Give me my ham!" Could there be a more striking image of black frustration and helplessness?

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Orchestre de Paris

Semyon Bychkov conductor

Thursday 1 February at 7.30pm
Elizabeth Norberg-Schulz soprano
Jard van Nes mezzo-soprano
Mahler Symphony No 2 Resurrection

Friday 2 February at 7.30pm
Maxim Vengerov violin
Gilbert Amy Trois Scènes pour Orchestre (UK premiere)
Mendelssohn Violin Concerto
Stravinsky The Rite of Spring

Tickets for each concert £10 £14 £18.50 £25 £30
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With newly appointed
Principal Guest Conductor
Jiří Bělohlávek
Igor Ardasev piano
Petr Eben Prague Nocturne
Dvořák The Wood Dove
Martinů Piano Concerto No 4
Janáček Taras Bulba

All seats £10 and unreserved. Children, students, unemployed and over 60s £5.
Phone 0171 960 4242 to book your tickets.



CHOICE 1

**Willis Hall's
Long and the
Short and the
Tall returns**

VENUE: In preview at
the Albany Theatre



CHOICE 2

**Joel Higgins stars
in the new
musical, The
Fields of Ambrosia**

VENUE: Opening night at
the Aldwych Theatre

THE TIMES
ARTS

CHOICE 3

**Arnold Wesker
dives into
medieval history
for his new play**

VENUE: In preview at
the Norwich Playhouse

VISUAL ART

**From British
trains to Cuban
whores: variety
is the spice of
life in current
photography shows**

Of smoke and Havana

GALLERIES:
Guy Walters
on the very
different
moods of three
photography
exhibitions

Like smells, photographs are expert at releasing feelings of nostalgia. This is particularly evident at *Go by Train*, a series of railway photographs by Colin Gifford. This is an exhibition that will appeal to more than just loco buffs, for *Go by Train* may even conjure wistfulness in those who are too young to have lived and travelled in the age of steam.

The photographs, taken between 1957 and 1961, portray a time when pollution was merely an issue for a chimney, and diesel power was just a glint in an engineer's eye. At their best, Gifford's black-and-white images are as powerful as any by Sebastião Salgado, and as evocative of a time and place as works by contemporaries such as Don McCullin and Roger Mayne. Gifford's trick is not merely to snap adoringly a loco in action, but to place it within its working and social context. The majesty of these smoke-blowing machines is enhanced by this, and much fun can be had noting the cars, fashions and advertisements that appear alongside them.

Occasionally, Gifford pushes this to an extreme. In the snow-clad *Misty Moor Park*, a trail of smoke in the middle distance, surely the most unusual position from which to see a train than from daredevilishly near the track. *Burley Back Street* shows a goods train crossing a viaduct that runs through a terrace of one-up and two-downs while, in a foreground that looks almost staged, some short-trousered boys are playing in the middle of the street.

Perhaps Gifford's biggest achievement is his sense of patience and planning. Some of the trains pictured may have run only twice a day, and yet he has been so meticulously consulted and located, so carefully scouted well in advance. Then to take a photograph containing both grandeur and fondness is impressive indeed. *National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC2, (0171-239 5420) until Feb 25*

■ *Go by Train* is representative of Britain's erstwhile



(Clockwise from top): One of Nick Danziger's pictures of urban blight in his show *A British Journey*; workers at Bristol station in the 1950s, from Colin Gifford's *Go by Train*; a bride, from Cristina Piza's *Havana Dreams*

industrial might, then Nick Danziger's *A British Journey* is an account of today's banal, everyday, manufacturing sector. Danziger spent two years touring the places that have been left hollow by the absence of industry, and the results are potentially very gloomy indeed. This purports to be an exhibition about "survival", in which communities all over Britain battle against unemployment and public-sector cuts.

A British Journey sounds horrifically worthy, but the results are far more uplifting than expected. Not for Danziger the condescending and guilt-inducing lens that captures mental and economic depression and then asks the other half to say: "Aren't we lucky?"

Instead, many of the images contain much cheer. Two boys romp in a burst water main, two elderly gentlemen heartily drink stout, a group of queuing middle-aged women strike silly poses for the camera, and a man removes his jeans to reveal an eye tattooed on each buttock.

However, this is not to gloss over the sense of squalor and bleakness. This is an exhibition of personal triumph over adversity, and a shot of a graveyard suggests an inescapable social hegemony.

National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, Bradford (01274 727488), until Feb 12

■ A lack of condescension is also present in *Havana Dreams*, Cristina Piza's por-

trait of romance and sexuality in present-day Cuba. The images are accompanied by poetry by John Agard in an unusually successful partnership of the two media that never lapses into pretension or philanthropic drive.

Piza, who is Mexican and lives in Europe, contrasts a bride's preparations for the big day with portraits of *jiniteras* — prostitutes — on the streets. Much of the exhibition's success lies in its simplicity. Most of the black-and-white images are composed without a sense of deliberation or formality, which gives Piza's work the impression of true documentary.

The shots of the bride are the most arresting, capturing her ability to look as fine as any Western bride without

any expensive nuptial support staff. Photographs of her riding pillion are splendid, and the juxtaposition of her white trained dress with the grimy Havana streets is powerful. Best of all is the image of the wedding cake being towed by a bicycle through a city sidestreet.

The shots of the prostitutes are less successful as they are rather more posed. The photographs feel more like straight newspaper pictures than full-blown art. Agard's poetry bolsters the impact: "If it's a gateway/To Havana you're after/I will open my legs."

The Edge Gallery, 2 The Circle, Queen Elizabeth Street, London SE1 until Feb 4, (0171-403 4198)

Is their
byte better
than Bac

LONDON

THE FIELDS OF AMBROSIA
Opening night for this American musical with music by John Higgins, to a state-of-the-art production, the musical tells the story of the woman who set to be the most famous of all. Music by John Higgins. One US reviewer called it "a musical comedy with a heart".
Albany Theatre, 101-103, Tottenham Court Road, W1P 0LP. Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; Sun, 2pm and 5pm.

THE LONG AND THE SHORT AND THE TALL
A musical comedy, the musical tells the story of the woman who set to be the most famous of all. Music by John Higgins. One US reviewer called it "a musical comedy with a heart".
Albany Theatre, 101-103, Tottenham Court Road, W1P 0LP. Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; Sun, 2pm and 5pm.

THE MAGIC FLUTE
Another chance to see a production of a really good performance of Mozart's fairy tale. English National Opera leads a strong team for the production. The production is a collaboration between the English National Opera and the Royal Opera House.
Royal Opera House, 13-15, Covent Garden, WC2E 9DD. Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; Sun, 2pm and 5pm.

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Kris Anderson

ELSEWHERE

ST ANDREWS AND EDINBURGH
Scottish Chamber Orchestra opens its concert tonight with Mendelssohn's Hebrides overture. Trombones given as European premiere, followed by Leopold Mozart's work of the same name. In Edinburgh, Paul Tarmy, Brian's "Man of the Musical", transfers from London to Edinburgh. In Glasgow, a new production of "The Glass Menagerie" by the Glasgow Theatre Company.

BIRMINGHAM
The Birmingham Royal Philharmonic Orchestra gives a programme of orchestral music by Mozart and Haydn, opening with Handel's "Messiah". There are two free lunchtime concerts in town today too. Town Hall, 101-103, Tottenham Court Road, W1P 0LP. Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; Sun, 2pm and 5pm.

CINEMA

Lord Byron's biblical Mystery
Lord Byron's biblical Mystery. A film about the life of Lord Byron. Directed by Peter Kosminsky. Released by MCA Home Video.

CAT AND MOUSE (SHEEP)
A comedy about a cat and a mouse. Directed by Peter Kosminsky. Released by MCA Home Video.

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THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre shows in London

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WEDNESDAY JANUARY 31 1996

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 31 1996

THE TIMES
ARTS

OFFER

Enjoy a Valentine's
Day treat: see Peter
Hall's production
of *An Ideal
Husband* with The
Times Theatre Club

TOMORROW

Victor Hugo's novel
is updated to the
time of the Second
World War. In the
new French film
Les Misérables

MUSIC

How two British
brothers wrote a
computer program
that is going to
revolutionise the
world of music

JAZZ

From Mozart to
Thelonious Monk:
pianist Jacky
Terrasson plays
his neo-bop with
a classical touch

Richard Morrison talks to the twins with a program to change musical composition for ever

Is their
byte better
than Bach?

Art and science are usually mutually exclusive polarities in British intellectual life. But just occasionally CP. Snow's two cultures meet in a union so sweet that the pessimists are confounded. Sibelius 7 is one such union.

In five years this extraordinary computer program has changed the music profession for ever. It can notate, print and play a musical score faster than anything the world has ever seen. It may soon redefine the very nature of composition. And it is British, the brainchild of two brothers.

Jonathan and Ben Finn are twins. As toddlers they sang in the choir of King's College, Cambridge. But they were also mad about computers. When they went to the King's School, Canterbury, they started combining their two obsessions: music and microchips.

"We took over the computer room in the evenings and programmed all the BBC Micros to play minimalist music that would ripple round the lab," Jonathan says. "Or we would get the computer to harmonise Bach chorales. The results were a bit strange."

After school, their paths temporarily parted. Ben read music, then philosophy, at Cambridge; Jonathan read music at Oxford. It was the late 1980s, desktop publishing was just taking off, Jonathan hit on the notion of using a computer to notate music.

"Although Oxford music was not very enlightened, it did offer an optional electro-acoustic paper," he says. "So I wrote the bulk of what is now Sibelius 7, and submitted a print-out. I spent a term on it, nobody noticed I wasn't doing any other work." He named the program, of course, after another great Finn. It was 1,000 pages of computer-processed music.

Jonathan (Ben had helped Jonathan plan the program) realised that they had a winner, if they could find some way of marketing

Sibelius. Computer music programs were not unknown in 1990; in particular, the Americans had devised one called Finale and were marketing it assiduously. But the Finns had a secret weapon: speed.

Musical notation is an immensely complex language. It has developed over ten centuries and contains thousands of arcane conventions that are nevertheless sacrosanct to musicians. It is not too difficult to devise a program that reproduces the most basic tasks, or one that covers more ground but

moves very slowly. The Finns, however, had created a program that could organise huge, sophisticated packages of musical notation at lightning speed. A composer could improvise a whole piece at a keyboard and see it instantly notated on the screen. How?

"I deliberately wrote my program the hard way, in machine code," Jonathan says. "It took much longer, but it saves the computer from having to convert every instruction into number-crunching mode. Consequently it is probably a hundred times faster than any other music program." That is crucial; composers in the white heat of creativity don't want to wait while a computer works out how to space a dotted quintuplet.

In 1990, fresh out of university, the Finns sought Sibelius in a suitcase, and tried to interest music publishers in marketing it. The experience was dispiriting. "You would be shocked at how backward they are," Jonathan says. "Some didn't even use word processors. We drew a blank. So after a year we found premises in Cambridge and set up our own company."

Since then they have sold more than 2,000 Sibelius packages (the program runs only on a high-speed Acorn RISC computer) — to composers, colleges and, yes, even publishers. The Finns, now 26, employ five other people, and have representatives around the world.

Meanwhile, Jonathan has been refining the system, adding special notations for jazz, brass bands, early music, even gamelans. His

latest wheeze is "Flex-time", whereby a composer inputting music from the keyboard can vary the pulse or bend the rhythms and know that the computer will understand the idiom. Conversely, the computer can play back music with uncannily convincing classical rubato or jazz swing.

But essentially Sibelius 7 is now as perfect as it will ever need to be. Perfection does not come cheap: complete systems start at about £2,000. But to see it in action is breathtaking. If, for instance, Wagner returned to Earth and wanted

to add an extra bar near the beginning of *The Ring*, Sibelius 7 would take precisely one tenth of a second to re-format 100 orchestral parts covering four nights of music. Composers have been liberated from hundreds of hours of drudgery on every orchestral score.

What next for the Finns? Their sales have mostly been in Britain; a limitless overseas market remains to be tapped. But Jonathan believes his creative work in music programs has only just started. "I have secretly been working on ideas for getting the computer to compose

music," he says. "If you were writing an opera, for instance, you might want filler sections that simply played around with earlier material. Well, you could start off a process that the computer could continue, varying it at random."

"I've had some success already at getting the computer to imitate Copland. It couldn't write a Copland symphony yet, but it can produce music which, from bar to bar, does sound like the real thing. I've got much bigger ambitions than that, though."

Jonathan (left) and Benjamin Finn put Sibelius 7, their ground-breaking computer program, to work



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Steppe on it — and
don't spare the pianoNikolai Lugansky/
Malcolm Binns
Wigmore Hall

FOR good or ill, the wheel turns. Scarcely have we finished mourning the great Russian pianist Tatiana Nikolayeva, than her pupil Nikolai Lugansky, now 34 and winner of the 1994 Tchaikovsky Competition, begins to light the concert platforms of London.

There was something of the great lioness Nikolayeva there in the firm, relaxed arm weight of the left-hand chords in the slow movement of Beethoven's *Tempest* Sonata, answered by a clear, rounded song of right-hand recitatives.

His dedication to Rachmaninov also rang out from six of his *Preludes*. The Op 23 No 1 was a hypnotic patterning of variegated pianissimo; his Op 32 No 12 warmed by lively pedalling, yet crystalline of definition. Octave leap high from the Op 23 No 5 *Alla marchia* only to curve into a sleek, single line of rubato in No 4.

Neither virtuoso flourish nor rolling rubato ever takes place in Lugansky's playing for flamboyant effect alone. Rather it is assimilated into the music's own heartbeat; and nowhere more so than in Scriabin's Second Sonata. Fanciful, whimsical, and mixed from a daring palette of tone colours, this was a true *Sonata-fantasia*. Lugansky's recital ended with Prokofiev's Sonata No 6, moving from

those firmly sprung, coiled rhythms to the reflective logic of its waltz and the morose merriment of its last movement.

It took Malcolm Binns 30 years to return to the Wigmore Hall to play the complete Chopin *Etudes* once again. Monday was the occasion of his 60th birthday concert, and an audience of warm well-wishers applauded an evening of loud and generally undiscriminating performances. The first dozen *Etudes* (Op 10) were true to their name: a flash and a splash of technical virtuosity with little attention paid to the unique sound world of each *Etude*.

For the Op 25 set, Binns seemed more relaxed. Nos 3, 4 and 5 found his fingers robust, his spirits high. But too often figuration and pacing seemed cavalier, dynamic levels existed only in primary colours, and final chords were left ringing in the sustaining pedal while body and hands were already preparing themselves for the next piece.

HILARY FINCH

In from the cold

Lars Vogt
Queen Elizabeth Hall

AFTER his impressive London debut in this hall nearly four years ago, Lars Vogt has rapidly consolidated his reputation in his native Germany and elsewhere as an outstanding talent.

In his mid-twenties, Vogt combines a resourceful command of technique with a perceptive musicality after the style of Brendel, so that the intellect is engaged as well as the ear rewarded by the quality of insight into established classics.

This was especially true of the major work in his Sunday afternoon contribution to the South Bank's International Piano Series, when the F minor piano sonata by Brahms (Op 5) drew a sense of its ample proportions from an imperious opening to a majestic finale five movements later. The chorale tune emerged from this with the warmth of a benediction.

Yet there was never any temptation to overstate the music, Vogt preferring to temper its ardour with sensitivity for its detail. Maybe in the *Andante* movement, the arpeggiated chords were a touch too articulated, with a minuscule hesitation before the last note that threatened to become a mannerism, but the reminiscent mood of the fourth movement intermezzo

was expressively caught and the pianism throughout had vigour and freshness.

At the start of the programme, the wind-chill factor from outside seemed to be in Vogt's fingers as he began the *Three Preludes* by Henri Dutilleul with a stiff account of No 1, *D'ombre et de silence*, that made it sound like the accompaniment to a creepy silent film.

But the pianist's approach loosened up with a contrast of boldness and restraint in the remaining two pieces. Schubert's six *Moments musicaux* (D 790) benefited from increasing flexibility of phrasing, with subtle pointing of detail in the first, giving way to reflective warmth in its central section and a gentle poetry in No 2.

The third and fourth gained engaging character from a sense of rubato and nicely varied shading respectively, and the remaining two combined a lightness of touch with balance of texture that bestowed enduring charm on musically small matters.

NOEL GOODWIN

JAZZ: Clive Davis on pianist Jacky Terrasson, a cat with classical training

Big ears, flying fingers
and a foot in each camp

Hybrid hit: Terrasson fuses old and modern traditions

years, has worked his passage through the highly competitive club circuit of New York.

Contemporary improvising has become a fearfully virtuosic business in which physical prowess often takes precedence over artistry. Terrasson, at his most

inspired, proves himself capable of alternating between the unbridled power of a quarter-mile hurdler and the grace of a dancer.

He admires the *joie de vivre* of Erroll Garner, yet he is equally ready to discuss his enthusiasm for Michelangelo and Glenn Gould or, as he does on his album, perform a tribute to the French composer Lili Boulanger.

For all the praise heaped on the record, he insists that his best work is produced in the crucible of a live show, where he and his bassist Ugonna Okegwo and his new drummer Clarence Penn can interweave impromptu ideas and phrases somewhat in the style of another of Terrasson's early role models, the Bill Evans Trio. To that end, his latest album, *Reach* — due out soon — was recorded in an informal studio setting as possible.

Just as the renowned recording engineer Rudy Van Gelder used to record the mid-1950s Miles Davis quintet in his New Jersey living room, so Terrasson had the session taped in a similar setting, with just two overhead microphones for all three musicians. No booths, no headphones.

"It sounds like a live album but without the audience," he explains in his heavily accented English. "I'm curious to see how it's received. It's a little more on the raw side — not so shy, I would say. But I like that, it's more the way I am myself. This is closer to what I tried to do on the first album, more of a reflection of what we sound like live."

Unlike other young musicians who are catapulted into spectacular — and often overhyped — careers before they have found their own voice, Terrasson has followed his own path.

After discovering jazz at the age of 12, courtesy of his mother's record collection, he went on to consolidate his earlier classical training at a music lycée in Paris, and later spent one year on scholarship at the Berklee school in Boston.

After a "wasted" year of military service in France, he spent a further three years based in France. It was 1990 before he returned to New York and, in 1993, he found himself very much in demand after winning that year's Thelonious Monk competition in Washington. He was subsequently offered a job by the singer Betty Carter, whose trio has acted as a finishing school for some of the best young musicians of recent years.

Carter has an unfailing instinct for homing in on players with an individual grasp of texture and harmony. When she says, in the polliest way possible, that Jacky Terrasson has "big ears", you know exactly what she means.

Jacky Terrasson is at the Jazz Cafe, London NW1 (0171-5441341) tomorrow

Valentine's dates

THE TIMES
THEATRE
CLUB

TO THE chocolates and flowers this Valentine's Day, may we suggest adding one of our celebrated packages offering dinner in a fine restaurant as well as seats at a West End show? The first package gives you a chance to see Peter Hall's acclaimed revival of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* at the Haymarket Theatre, after a two-course dinner at Celebrities restaurant in the five-star Hampshire Hotel on Leicester Square. Cost: £30 per person.

In our second package, dinner at the Ad Lib restaurant in Covent Garden is followed by best seats to your choice of play, either the romantic musicals *The Fields of Ambrosia* and *Mack and Mabel*; long-running hits *Blood Brothers*, *Buddy and Fame*, or the thrillers *Dead Guilty* and *The Mousetrap*. Once again, the cost is £30 per person.

For a truly magnificent evening choose any West End show, then enjoy a two-course candlelit dinner and cabaret at Centre Stage restaurant in Covent Garden. The cost is just £59 per person.

Finally, Radisson Edwardian Hotels is offering a selection of romantic breaks from as little as £49.50 per person. The offer includes overnight accommodation, theatre ticket and a full English breakfast. Theatre Club members who book this package for February 13 or 14 will find a bottle of champagne awaiting them in their room. To claim your free champagne, quote your membership number when booking.

To book, please call Centre Stage on 0800 335588

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NORTHAMPTON
Dea Theatre
Feb 13-14
● SAVE 15 per cent (tickets normally £17) on performances by Rambert Dance Company of *Petit Mort* and the Northampton premiere of *Meeting Point*, danced to Michael Nyman's Saxophone Concerto. Tel 01604 24811

ABERYSTWYTH
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● A FREE glass of champagne when you see *Howard's End*, an adaptation of E.M. Forster's beautiful story of two sisters. Tickets £3.95 to £4.95. Tel 014970 62922

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PA TO MANAGING DIRECTOR & FAR EAST DEVELOPER

Experienced PA/Secretary required to assist in running of small office. Good shorthand/MSWord 6. Property company exp preferred. NON SMOKER. CV's to Herbert Properties Limited 3 Three Kings Yard, London W1P 1PL. Or Fax 0171 499 7337.

PA to Managing Director & Far East Developer - accuracy, hard working, excellent organisational skills required, together with 100% Shorthand/Typing. Successful candidate must be articulate, flexible and must have ability to prioritise. Salary £20,000 + Bonus.

SECRETARY TO SALES DIRECTOR & SALES TEAM - successful candidate must be a team player, with excellent typing and shorthand skills. Must be able to take on senior multiple retail buyers and work under pressure and to deadline. Salary £17,000 + Bonus.

Apply in writing to: Ms Jane Gathers
PA to Managing Director
Kierman Confectionery Company Limited
40 Marylebone High Street,
London W1M 4EB
Tel: 0171 479 1028 (local)
Fax: 0171 487 3319/335 7545

PA TO DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

SALARY £17,366 - £19,199 PER ANNUM
PLUS EXCELLENT BENEFITS

A proactive Personal Assistant used to working at a senior level is required to work for our Director of Finance. This challenging role requires strong secretarial skills (80/55) and outstanding organisational skills. Full involvement on a daily basis in finance issues, often of a complex nature is guaranteed. You will need to manage his busy diary, arrange meetings, type correspondence and reports (audio), handle telephone calls and incoming mail and ensure the smooth running of his office. A professional, confident manner is required together with excellent interpersonal skills. Supervisory experience is also necessary as you will be managing another secretary.

For an application form and further information please contact Jennifer MacEwan, Recruitment Assistant on 0171 372 5671 extension 226.

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms is Wednesday 14th February 1996. Interviews will be held on Wednesday 21st February 1996.

PCHA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

King's Healthcare NHS Trust

Executive Nursing/Quality Team.
Personal Assistant to
Executive Director - Nursing/Quality
£17,671 - £20,260 p.a. inc.

The Executive Nursing/Quality Team is a busy, high profile team within King's Healthcare, actively engaged in developing Nursing/Midwifery and Continuous Quality Improvement across the Trust.

The role of the Personal Assistant is to provide full administrative and secretarial support services to the Executive Director - Nursing/Quality and deputise for the Office Manager. This is a challenging post and the successful applicant must demonstrate strong interpersonal and organisational skills and also have excellent IT knowledge. A willingness to make a positive contribution to a cohesive and friendly team is a pre-requisite for the post.

Further details, a job description and application form are available from EM/QT, 2nd Floor, King's Healthcare NHS Trust (Dulwich), East Dulwich Grove, London SE22 8PT. Tel: 0171 346 6390/92. For informal discussions regarding this position, contact Marie Gilbert, Customer Care and Office Manager on 0171 346 6398.

Closing date: 14th February 1996.
Interview date: 28th February 1996.

WORKING TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

We are a top secretarial recruitment consultancy with Blue Chip clients throughout London.

We are looking for two new permanent consultants. One for our West End office and one for our City office.

We are looking for dynamic, commercially aware people with strong sales/marketing backgrounds and/or recruitment experience. In addition, a sound knowledge of the City is required for the City position.

We offer competitive salaries and commission structure, on-going training and the opportunity to develop future business from an established client base.

Please telephone Jennifer Johnson on 0171 628 9529 or fax your CV on 0171 920 0641.

Elizabeth Hunt

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Handwritten Secretary needed for this small, friendly Independent Girls' School close to Sharnbrook. It is an interesting and varied job in a very busy office. You will need to be an excellent communicator to deal with staff, parents, and girls aged 4 to 18. You will also need exceptional organisational and administrative skills, word processing and audio typing.

The hours are 9.30-5.30, Monday to Friday, in term time, and very much shorter during school holidays. Salary c. £17,000 + pension, with excellent holidays.

Please send c.v. and handwritten covering letter to The Headmistress, Francis Holland School, 30 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 9JF, giving the address, telephone and fax numbers of the referees, by Monday February 26th. Interviews will take place on Monday, February 26th. No agencies or telephone enquiries please.

DIRECTORS' PA

Experienced PA/Secretary required to assist in running of small office. Good shorthand/MSWord 6. Property company exp preferred. NON SMOKER. CV's to Herbert Properties Limited 3 Three Kings Yard, London W1P 1PL. Or Fax 0171 499 7337.

NO AGENCIES

TOWNHIDE

LEADING PA £18,000 + FOR INTERNATIONAL FINANCE & PROPERTY CO.

PLEASE CONFIRM BY HANDWRITTEN LETTER & CV. 3/4 SPEED & HANDWRITING OF 110 WPM TYPING. (2) ENL & OR PROP. & OR SMALL CO. BACKGROUND. (3) GOOD A/C & COMPUTER SKILLS (4) N/S

TO FAX NO: 01722 743123.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

For senior telephone exec. Admin. support, customer service, scheduling meetings and travel. General office duties. W/M, Gen. Good. Flexibility in Specialised French or other. 2 years exp. Excellent remuneration package. Fax cv & salary requirements to: 0171 589 6323

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now manages nearly 11,000 homes in North West and Central London and is committed to providing homes for those in housing need.

For an application form and further information please contact Jennifer MacEwan, Recruitment Assistant on 0171 372 5671 extension 226.

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This position would suit City based candidates with several years experience within a trading floor environment. You will report to the Director, co-ordinating team support staff and departmental administration. There will be frequent liaison with UK and European clients. An involved and often demanding role offering excellent career progression. 80wpm shorthand, Word 6, Excel, Lotus Notes. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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Working closely with the MD involves using your organisational, interpersonal and IT skills to the full. Creative presentations, special projects and purchasing are part of your interesting remit. The MD will appoint a genuine completer, who is flexible on hours, accustomed to influencing others and has a degree level education. 60wpm typing. Age 23-35. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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A unique position has arisen to suit a true Personal Assistant for a high profile Chairman with a political background. In addition to excellent audio and shorthand skills, you will have experience of working at the very highest level, and the ability to undertake a variety of duties in order to assist this gentleman's increasingly busy schedule. 100/60wpm. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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This is a true PA role offering involvement in the business and personal development. You must be able to make decisions and prioritise work when under pressure, be well organised and a self starter.

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Working in Dutch and English you will manage existing clients, assist in major publicity campaigns, issue price quotations, prepare reports and research markets.

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anced Spanish good educational level and WP skills. Skills perfect for gallery assistant. Career Development 0171 489 0889.

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required for West End based Co. Mature personality with the ability to oversee and pull together international operations. Challenges role for computer literate candidate. Database experience essential. Age 28+. Salary to £25,000. Don't miss this opportunity! Please call Jonathan Barrow on 0171 434 4612. GUY'S CLIFF, W1T 6JH. GUY'S CLIFF, W1T 6JH.

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Sec/Asst. for Int. Co. £18K M/T. Must have 2 years exp. in DTP and French. Please call 0171 287 0242.

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Director level shorthand secretary required for the varied portfolio. Plenty of involvement and bosses who know how to treat their staff. A great atmosphere, regular hours and a team environment. This is a challenging position. 50 wpm shorthand, £18,500 + mortgage subsidy.

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A smart, confident secretary with good administration skills required for this private banking office of the finance house. Regular face-to-face client contact and the opportunity to learn the ropes. 30 wpm typing, £20,000 + benefits.

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£18K + BANKING BENEFITS
An interesting and varied role for a public secretary with a good knowledge of Swedish and English. The role involves a team of 4 traders and two your initiative and a prestigious international bank. Banking experience useful. Outgoing and proactive approach essential.

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Tel: 0171 734 3380 / 355 175
Fax: 0171 499 0568

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Successful, rapidly expanding finance co seeks dynamic secretary with fluent French to work in varied responsible role. High admin content. You will assist a team of 4 traders and two your initiative and a prestigious international bank. Banking experience useful. Outgoing and proactive approach essential.

For more information please call Samantha on 0171 287 0600.

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Exciting opportunity for Secretary/Office Administrator. This is a challenging & responsible role involving you the chance to use your initiative in account management/new business promotion, as well as general administration. Fluent German essential. Call Nicola

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PA/SECRETARY - FRANKFURT

To £32K equivalent
Marketing team of international bank is looking for experienced English PA/Secretary with fluent German. Other opportunities for German mother tongue PAs within 100 miles of Frankfurt.

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To £21K equivalent
Consumer services bank (fluent French, perfect English, good skills and experience) for 2 busy executives in need of someone they can rely on and delegate to. Plenty of organizing.

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Small PR co -

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This young PR co is looking for a PA to complement their existing PA. You need good communication skills and a sound background in the PR world. You must have good s/h and excellent organizational skills, be able to work under pressure and be a team player with total involvement. Knowledge of Apple Mac, Word 6, Excel, Lotus Notes. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

Join the Elite!

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This Int'l Executive Search Co. are looking for a PA to complement their existing PA. You need good communication skills and a sound background in the PR world. You must have good s/h and excellent organizational skills, be able to work under pressure and be a team player with total involvement. Knowledge of Apple Mac, Word 6, Excel, Lotus Notes. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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property company. An opportunity to work in a fast moving, active PA at our prestigious London office. The successful applicant should be a graduate with a full working knowledge of the property market. Required: excellent s/h and shorthand skills, a sound background in the PR world. You must have good s/h and excellent organizational skills, be able to work under pressure and be a team player with total involvement. Knowledge of Apple Mac, Word 6, Excel, Lotus Notes. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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Could you be the many talented PA who pulls together the varied facets of this high-level position? Previous legal exp/Company Secretarial. Demanding, prestigious role working for a dynamic Director/Managing Legal professional in leading international firm. Age 23-35. TYP 60wpm (audio/shorthand). Call Joanne Wallace on 0171 256 6608.

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LETTINGS & SALES NEGOTIATORS

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Los Angeles quakes as Gretzky threatens to skate out of town

Great One striving for last tilt at glory



Oliver Holt finds ice hockey's greatest player frustrated in his ambition to finish on a high

Wayne Gretzky looked haggard. A light beard of a few days' growth covered his face and he answered questions with smiles of weary relief. Things have started to go wrong in Tinseltown for the greatest ice hockey player the world has seen, the man who brought Hollywood stars like Sylvester Stallone to the rink side to watch him in wonder. He wants one last taste of glory before he retires, but he is being undone by the mediocrity that surrounds him.

Gretzky, who is known simply as The Great One across North America, turned 35 on Friday and, on Saturday, he inspired the Los Angeles Kings to a nerve-racking 5-4 victory over the lowly Anaheim Mighty Ducks. One goal and three assists helped to break a run of eight games without a win, but it is hardly the heights for which Gretzky had been hoping. Afterwards, the judges named him man of the match, and the crowd in the cavernous Great Western Forum stood and cheered wildly with fear in their hearts. Just as the city has been energised by the news that the basketball star, Earvin "Magic" Johnson, so it has been dismayed by the news that Gretzky may be about to leave.

Gretzky, whose fourth position in the National Hockey League's scoring tables this season has been achieved despite his side's travails, has grown tired of skating uphill, carrying the whole team on his slender frame. He has let it be known that unless the Kings demonstrate their ambition by acquiring new players capable of taking the team to victory in the Stanley Cup, the sport's biggest prize, he will seek to end his career elsewhere. The St Louis Blues have already stated their interest.

The last time he was sold, eight years ago, it created a national scandal. Television stations across Canada interrupted their programmes to tell a shocked nation that the Edmonton Oilers had traded him to the Kings for \$15 million plus two outstanding young players. Peter Pocklington, the Oilers' owner, was banged in effigy outside the team's arena. Gretzky cried at the press conference.

In *Sports Illustrated*, the Vancouver journalist, Tim Taylor, wrote about the deal Canadians still refer to bitterly as "The Trade" under the headline "A Nation in Mourning". "The best hockey player in the world was ours and the Americans flew up from Hollywood and bought him," he wrote. "It wasn't the Canadian heart that was torn, it was the Canadian psyche that was ripped by the upstart cut to the paranoia."

Yet Gretzky's popularity relies on more than nationality. At the Forum, almost every team shirt among the audience has his name emblazoned on the back, and in the media room, the journalists talk of what a privilege it has been to watch him for the past six years. The reasons for their reverence are writ large in the record books.

After a while, it gets boring, so complete is his dominance. It reads like this. Most goals: Wayne Gretzky. Most assists: Wayne Gretzky. Highest points per game average: Wayne Gretzky. Most three or more goal games: Wayne Gretzky. Most 100 or more point seasons: Wayne Gretzky. Most goals in one season: Wayne Gretzky. That is just the beginning and, when you realise he won the trophy for most gentlemanly player on four occasions as well, it is easy to understand what an asset he is to the sport. His gift is that, with his



Gretzky in full flight, a thrilling sight to delight the crowds and send cold shivers down opponents' spines

grace and vision, he makes the game accessible to those unversed in its finer points. His passes are like Glenn Hoddle's or Dan Marino's, splitting defences, drawing defenders out of position. He wrong-foots opponents with swift changes of direction, with feints and dummies, and, although he is not as fast as he used to be, he can still snuff out a goal with the best of them.

For seven years in a row in the 1980s, he was the NHL's leading scorer and always by a country mile. He took the Kings to the Stanley Cup finals in 1993, although they lost to the Montreal Canadiens, and, after returning from a career-threatening back injury, he topped the league's scoring again in 1994, although the Kings finished next to bottom of their division.

Now, though, it appears he has had enough of being second-best. "My priority is to see if this ownership group would be willing to go out and add a couple of guys to make the Kings a contender for the Stanley Cup," he said in the Kings locker-room, "but that would cost a lot of money and I'm not sure that they are in that position at this point in time."

"In my career, I've been lucky enough to play with some great players and I've done some fun things over the years. For me, the one thing I really have left is to win another championship. That's really all I want to do, and if that means leaving Los Angeles, that's what I'd want. What is it that motivates me to keep playing? Winning. I just like to win. I just enjoy winning."

Pugh tipped for key role

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE International Rugby Football Board (IRFB), having made fundamental change in Paris last August by declaring rugby union an open sport, concluded its annual council meeting in London yesterday by looking towards the management of the new era.

Quality leadership within rugby union is at a premium and the board will announce today the name of the new chairman, who will hold office for a three-year term.

Previously, the post has been rotated annually but the board has recognised the need for greater continuity. It is likely that England will waive their turn, with Vernon Pugh, chairman of the Welsh Rugby

Union, the probable beneficiary. The board will have reviewed the response to the advertised post of chief executive, from which Keith Rowlands will step down at the end of February after nine years. His successor will require a higher profile—and, possibly, a different base since a move from Bristol either to Dublin or the Continent is contemplated, for tax reasons.

The moratorium on law changes having lapsed, the 37 alterations proposed by member unions will step down at the end of February after nine years. His successor will require a higher profile—and, possibly, a different base since a move from Bristol either to Dublin or the Continent is contemplated, for tax reasons.

area, which was never so busy before changes made in 1992 to the rule and maul. After being interrupted by the weather last weekend, New South Wales hope to resume their tour today against England A at Leicester, where the kick-off has been brought forward to 2.30pm. England A have lost both previous games against fully-fledged provincial teams from the southern hemisphere but the likes of Austin Healey, the Orrell scrum half, and Tim Stimpson, West Herts' scrum half, will do themselves no harm by playing well today, with the senior XV in a comparatively unsettled state.

Another powerful performance this week from the South African Craig van der Walt, which deprived Carons Club, the defending champions, of a vital second-string point in their pursuit of ICL Lion Herts at the top of the Super Squash League, strengthened the impression that he might well emerge as the player of the season.

Van der Walt, of Oynore Valley Dragons, beat Tony Hands, the England No 9 and world ranked No 15, 15-10, 16-17, 15-10, 15-6, which would make nonsense of his own world ranking of No 43, had he not suffered such a desperate international season.

A bout of blood poisoning, triggered by a long undiagnosed gastric leakage, saw him struggling for form last year, when he lost his national title to Craig Wapnick and was left out of the South African squad.

"Since getting the body sorted out again, I have played well on the circuit but missed chances to assert myself both in the World Open and the Mahindra Challenge late last year," the South African said.

The next fixture, on February 12, against the undefeated league leaders, who field in Chris Walker, Del Harris and Mark Chaloner, three members of the England squad which won the world team title in Cairo last November, offers van der Walt the chance of an even greater prize in the shape of Walker, the England captain. The match has been scheduled to Macgregor Squash Club to cater for the large crowd expected.

S African stirs up rankings

By COLIN MCQUILLAN

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Results, page 40

Norman in inducements row

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT, IN PERTH

FEW subjects have dogged the PGA European Tour down the years as much as the appearance money paid to the leading golfers as an inducement to play in tournaments. On the eve of the Heineken Classic, the second event on this year's European Tour, the subject raised its head once more.

Ken Schofield, executive director of the PGA European Tour, said that he had written to the sponsors of three major events—the Murphy's Irish Open, the Canon European Masters in Switzerland and the Dubai Desert Classic—accusing them of breaching the Tour's guidelines with regard to appearance money. The Tour's recommendation is that appearance money should not total more than 25 per cent of the purse.

Greg Norman, the world

No 1, competed in these events and it was partly to attract him that sponsors exceeded the guidelines. Schofield's remarks appear to be aimed at Norman, who said: "Why am I being singled out? Everybody gets it. Other

guys got appearance money as well as me. This is discrimination. Eliminating appearance money is up to the sponsors. They cannot be dictated to. They can do what they like. No one is ever going to change that."

Frank Williams, Norman's manager, has reportedly claimed that attempts to eliminate appearance money would constitute restraint of trade for Norman.

However, Schofield disagreed. "I'd have thought that provided the fellow is qualified to enter, then it is hard for him to say he is being restrained," he said. "We are doing what is best for the majority. If Frank and Greg say they may be being restrained, I say to them 'you must test that'. I have talked to our legal counsel and I am pretty relaxed about that."

Schofield: accusations



Barking up a wrong tree?

Cultural Baggage: Dogs. Radio 3, 8.55pm.

"Sometimes," croons the man with the guitar, "I wonder about the dog in man 'cos dogs are everywhere." I do not follow the logic of this. Also, I am perplexed about another line in the song that says "Dogs always wag their tails at pretty girls." Does the man mean pretty dogs? This *melange* of canine quotes should please mind dog-lovers, upset others. They are anonymously delivered, except when Noel Coward breathes mad dogs with Englishmen. Who, I wonder, is it who says that he hates dog owners? He calls them cowards because they lack the guts to bite people themselves. How many female heads will nod in sympathy. I wonder, as one woman says she prefers dogs to men because four-legged pets let her down less often?

Birmingham Lunchtime Concert. Radio 3, 1.00pm.

You cannot say about Paul Hindemith's music that it usually warms the heart and tickles the ribs. But even so, Hindemith's music is a hair down. Today's recital by the Endellion Quartet is delivered by a Hindemith work whose title takes almost as long to say as it does to play: *Overture to Wagner's The Flying Dutchman as played at night by a bad spa band at 7am in the spring*. It has a fair selection of deliberately played wrong notes. Perhaps it is not surprising that Hindemith wrote this piece. After all, he did write a lot of music for amateurs to play. Haydn's *Sunset* quartet and Shostakovich's Quartet No 7 are the other works in today's concert. Peter Daville

RADIO 1
FM Stereo, 4.00am Chris Warren 6.30
Chris Evans 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00
Lisa Varnam, and at 12.30-12.45pm
Midnight and at 1.15 The Net 2.00
Nicky Campbell 4.00 Mark Goodier, and
at 5.30-6.45 Newsbeat, 6.15 The Net
7.00 Evening Session 8.00 Radio Tip
Top with Kid Tempo and the Ginger
Prince 10.00 Mark Radcliffe Midnight
Wendy Lloyd, and at 12.15am The Net

RADIO 2
FM Stereo, 6.00am Sarah Kennedy
7.30 Wogan 9.30 Ken Bruce 11.30
Jimmy Young 2.00pm Debbie Thorne
3.30 Ed Stewart 5.00 John Dunn 7.00
Jim Lloyd with Folk on 2 8.00 Paddy
Seeger (45) 8.30 Rock Island Line. The
History of the (24) 9.00 Heats and
Hends and Voices (55) 9.30 Nigel
Hogden 10.30 The Jamieson 12.05am
Steve Madden 3.00-4.00 Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE
5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 The
Breakfast Programme 8.30 The Maga-
zine, and 10.35 Euronews 11.30 Natural
History 12.00 Midday with Mel, and at
12.30pm Moneychat, and at 1.15
Entertainment News 2.05 Ruscoe on
Five, and at 3.45 Entertainment News
4.00 John Kennedy 5.45 Entertainment
News 7.00 News Extra, and at 7.30 sport
7.35 Trevor Brook's Football Night.
Asian Villa v Liverpool and Nottingham
Forest v Leeds United 10.05 News Talk
11.00 Night Edit, and at 11.15 Financial
World Tonight 12.05am After Hours
2.05 Up All Night

TALK RADIO
6.00am Saddy Watt 7.00 Simon Bates
10.00 Jonathan King 12.00 Tommy
Boyd 2.00pm Anna Freston 4.00 Scott
Chisholm 7.00 Sean Bolger 9.00 Moz
Dea 10.00 James White 1.00-6.00am
Ian Collins

CLASSIC FM
4.00am Mark Griffiths 6.00 Nicky
6.00am Nicky Kelly 12.00 Simon
Simons 2.00pm Concerto 3.00 James
Crick 6.00 Newsnight 6.30 Serenade 7.00
Gardening Forum in 6.00 Country
Concert 10.00 Michael Mappin 1.00am
Mel Cooper

RADIO 3
6.00am On Air, with Andrew
McGregor, Strauss (Death
and Transfiguration, Berlin
Philharmonic under Herbert
von Karajan); Handel
(Concerto Grosso in F: Les
Muscades du Louvre under
Marc Winkowski); Gershwin
(An American in Paris, New
York Philharmonic under
Michael Tison Thomas);
Smetana (Cervena, The
Bartok Bridge, Czech Po
under Karl Ankerl); 8.30
Musicals (Concerto in G minor:
Academy of St Martin-in-the
Fields under Neville Martin)
9.00 Morning Collection with
Paul Gambaccini, Ravel
(Piano Concerto in G);
Canciones (Dieu, parole, le
Sacrifice d'Abraham); 9.30
Mozart (Violin Concerto No 3
in G)
10.00 Musical Encounters, with
Chris de Souza, Beethoven
(Rondino in E flat: Wind
Soloists of the Chamber
Orchestra of Europe); 10.07
Artist of the Week: Philip
Fowke, piano, plays Ravel
(Valse noble, and other
sentimentales); Scriabin
(Poem of Ecstasy: BBC
Symphony Orchestra under
Norman Del Mar); Joseph
Maier (Waldesliege); and
paganini hat er in;
Mozart (Violin); Tchaikovsky
(Romeo and Juliet); 11.15
Joseph Maier (Hat dich die
Rebe berührt); Beethoven
(Wind Quintet in E flat, Op
79); Tormore (When David
Heard: Choir of Trinity College
under Richard Marlow); First
Grand Fantasia and Toccata:
Philip Fowke, piano; Royal
Liverpool PO under Hildes

12.00 Composer of the Week.
Janáček (Mládí, Potulný
planet; The Malopuz
Case Act 3)
1.00pm Birmingham Lunchtime
Concert: See Choice
2.00 Schools. Together 2.20 Time
and Tune 2.40 Drama
Workshop
3.00 Midweek Choice, presented
by Susan Sharpe, including
Prokofiev (Ruslan and
Lyudmila in E flat)
4.00 Choral Evening, live from
Exeter Cathedral
5.00 The Music of the
Orleans, Sarah Walker
boards a Mississippi
steamerboat
5.15 In Tune, presented by
Clare Green
7.30 Edinburgh International
Festival 1995: NDR
Symphony Orchestra under
Gunter Wand performs
Schubert (Symphony No 8 in
B minor, Unfinished;
Symphony No 9 in C, Great)
8.55 Cultural Baggage. See
Choice
9.15 De Profundis Clamant
Orchestra of the Renaissance
under Richard Chelham
performs music for the dead
and songs to the Virgin by
Montes, Victoria, Caballero,
Palestrina and Josquin
10.45 Night Waves reviews a
biography of the American
author F. Scott Fitzgerald
11.30-12.30am Voices, presented
by Iain Burnside. Catrin Wyn-
 Davies, soprano, Sara
Folger, mezzo, performs
songs and duets by Rossini,
Donizetti, Verdi, Puccini and
Britten
1.00-1.20 Night School.
Versaplay

RADIO 4
8.55am Shipping (LW only) 6.00.
News, and weather 6.10
Farming Today 6.25 Prayer
for the Day 6.30 Today, and
6.00, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 8.30
News 6.55, 7.55 Weather
7.25, 8.25 Sport 7.45
Thought for the Day 8.40
Yesterday in Parliament 8.55
Weather
9.00 News 9.05 Midweek, with
Times columnist Libby Parves
10.00-10.30 News: A Good Road
(FM only)
10.00 Daily Service (LW only)
10.15 This Soap's Life (LW only)
10.30 Women's Hour, introduced
by Jenni Murray
11.30 Gardeners' Question Time
from the Little Aston
Afternoon Women's Institute
in Sutton Coldfield, West
Midlands (i)
12.00 News, and Yours
12.25pm Babbalanza Hall. Final
episode of the 18th-century
soap-com by Scott Cherry 12.55
Weather
1.00 The World at One
1.40 The Archers (i) 1.55
Shipping Forecast
2.00 News: Kaleidoscope is a
short story from The
Illustrated Man, written and
adapted by Ray Bradbury.
With Tom Watson and Patsy
Wells (i)
2.45 Letters from Here and
There, in the fifth of six
programmes, the novelist Tim
Parry glimpses Italian family
life on the beach in Pescara
3.00 News: The Afternoon Shift
4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope
reviews the stage production
of *Love Life* by the composer
Kurt Weill, and talks to
Maureen Lipman about her
role in *The River*

8.30 Still Lives (i)
9.00 Eustace Barbara Myers talks
to Richard Dawkins, Professor
of the Public Understanding
of Science at Oxford
University (i)
9.30 Kaleidoscope (i) 9.59
Weather
10.00 The World Tonight, with
Isabel Hilton
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Love in
the Time of Cholera, by
Gabriel Garcia Marquez
(13/15)
11.00 On Baby Street. Comedy-
drama series (4/5)
11.30 Missed Demeanors: FM
with Eddie Izzard, Stephen
Frost, Jo Brand and Lee
Corneil (i)
11.30 Today in Parliament (LW)
12.00 News, and 12.25 Weather
12.30 The Late Book: The
Drowned World, by
J.G. Ballard. Read by
Nicholas Pegg and abridged
by Oliver Reynolds (8/10)
12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As
World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE, RADIO 1. FM 97.8-99.8. **RADIO 2.** FM 88.0,
90.2. **RADIO 3.** FM 90.2-92.4. **RADIO 4.** FM 92.4-94.6. **LW 150:** MW
138 (12.45-5.55am). **CLASSIC FM.** FM 100.1-102. **VIRGIN RADIO.** FM
105.8. MW 1197, 1215. **TALK RADIO UK.** MW 1053, 1089. **Television.**
Rosemary Smith and Susan Thomson

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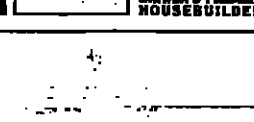
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Good news not news, dramatically speaking

The first two instalments of *The House* (BBC2) provided glorious proof that when it comes to making a drama out of a crisis, Michael Waldman is definitely your man. Last night, however, the director faced a much tougher challenge — conjuring enough crisis from the everyday dramas at the Royal Opera House to keep the series' disaster-thriller fans satisfied.

He rose to it as entertainingly as ever but in the process traded dangerously off the goodwill (fill-in, of course, from the perspective of the opera house management) generated by the superb first two programmes.

Time and again he marched, drooping greedily in anticipation, to the top of emergency hill and time and again what we found was... business pretty much as normal. Waldman let us down gently with well-observed and nicely understated humour — the

stagehand engrossed in a thriller as Darcy Bussell waited nervously for her big entrance; the chorus throwing an industrial relations wobbly while wearing bold wigs; and the groaning complaints of the male dancer forced to dance on pointe. "Every girl I have ever dropped is having her revenge."

It was entertaining, it was watchable but it was definitely not what we used to. With the series now halfway through its six-part run, the distinct possibility emerged that what began with the most dramatic of bangs could yet go out with a whimper. At least Jeremy Isaacs will be pleased.

For aficionados, it started promisingly enough. "Another night at the opera," began Ian Robinson's excellent narration, "and within the last hour Jeffrey Black has lost his voice. Goody, goody, we all thought — more management panic, more nervous stand-ins and more sulky audiences —

lovely. But not a bit of it. Instead Thomas Allen was woken up in Fulham (he had just flown in from Los Angeles), the announcement that he would be singing the part of the Count was greeted with almost wild applause and then he went out and sang it beautifully. Now, call me a Philistine, but where's the fun in that?

It was the same with Bussell. Last week she looked as if she was rehearsing for *Slipping Beauty*. This week it was her performance that was highly polished, rather than Maria Bjornson's set. Robinson tried hard to inject tension — "Princess Aurora was the pinnacle for any ballerina who wants to prove herself as a major star" — but to no avail. Bussell stepped out and proved it.

The episode may have been short of disaster (Bussell's subsequently badly injured ankle was

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

offered as a curious post-credits reminder of what might have been but it had some serious footage (ankleage?) of the pain dancers put themselves through. Zoltan Solymosi puffed and panted in the wings of the Kennedy Centre, while Bussell imploded her joints to one more effort. Drama, certainly, but where was the crisis? Quite possibly on its way — we saw how Mike Morris landed the

job of director of personnel and we got the first glimpse of how he intends to handle the notoriously difficult industrial relations at the opera house. Confrontation, I am pleased to report, looms.

By contrast with *The House*, *The Decision* (Channel 4) came close to being unwatchable at times. This was partly inevitable, given that its subject was amniocentesis, the test which detects whether an unborn baby has Down's syndrome. But it was also partly the fault of its makers, who seemed to have gone out of their way to find subjects with good reason to view the test with above average suspicion. Of the four women filmed, two were over 40 and a third had already given birth to a Down's syndrome baby.

Where the film scored highly, however, was in showing the mathematical muddle that surrounds the tests. There is no reason to expect pregnant women

to have degrees in advanced probability but you might hope that the professionals, in this case a midwife, could come up with something better than "it's all very clever, the computer sorts it out".

Julie, for instance, had been given a one in 130 chance of having a Down's syndrome baby by an initial blood protein test. Now she was coming under pressure to have amniocentesis, which gives a yes or no answer to Down's but carries a one in 100 chance of miscarriage. She wasn't alone in being confused and indeed frightened about what to do next. In the end she reluctantly chose to take the test... and got the answer that she and all pregnant women hope for. No Down's and no miscarriage.

However, the programme had little time for the relief that most amniocentesis tests must bring, just as it had little time to look at

the quality of life of Down's syndrome adults.

The longest, most harrowing section focused on Ellen who, at 44, had been given a one in two chance of having a Down's baby by the early test. She chose to take the second test and got the result she dreaded and expected. Amid the tears, the programme reminded us that this too was a test worth taking. Ellen and her husband had an appalling choice but at least they made it knowing all the facts.

Earlier, Maggie (Penelope Keith) and Andrew (William Gaunt) took their grandchildren off for a holiday in France in the week of the test. Some of you may remember that it was in France that the children's parents were killed in a car accident, thus providing the last palatable premise in British sit-com television history. It still isn't funny.

● Lynne Truss is on holiday

CHOICE

6.00am Business Breakfast (23325)

7.00am BBC Breakfast News (29404764)

9.10am News (Coastal, regional news and weather) (218495)

10.05am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (6787412)

10.30am Good Morning (s) (11182)

12.00pm News (Coastal, regional news and weather) (823493)

12.05pm Pebble Mill (s) (9061899)

12.50pm Regional News and weather (13766054)

1.00pm O'Clock News (Coastal and weather) (53783)

1.30pm Neighbours (s) (6482580)

2.00pm News (s) (19303054)

2.10pm The News (s) (4088257)

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CHOICE

6.00am Business and Work

7.00am Breakfast News (Coastal) (6884899)

7.15am Lassie (s) (3908677) 7.40 Teenage

Mutant Hero Turtles (s) (7055832) 8.05

Run the Risk (s) (Coastal) (s) (5015948)

8.35 The Record. Yesterday in Parliament (s)

(9299783) 9.00 Holiday Outings. A day

up to Venice from Manchester (s) (6149493)

9.05 Daytime on Two. Educational

programmes. Plus, for children, 10.00-

10.25 Playdays (6787837)

2.00pm Wishing (s) (6254219)

2.10 The Andrew Neil Show. Viewers

question newsmakers (s) (5222832)

3.00pm News (Coastal) and weather:

Westminster with Nick Ross (s)

(7952696) 3.55pm News (Coastal) and

weather (5818219)

4.00pm Today's the Day. History quiz (s) (866)

4.30pm Ready, Steady, Cook (s) (870)

5.00pm The Oprah Winfrey Show. A "where are

they now?" edition (Coastal) (s) (7500696)

5.40pm A Week to Remember (b/w). Paths

newspapers from 40 years ago (308870)

5.50pm A Different Country Practice.

Physiotherapists working for the Air Force

NHS Trust (219948)

6.00pm Star Trek: The Next Generation.

Science-fiction adventures (Coastal) (s)

(989528)

6.45pm The O Zone. Pop music (s) (561073)

7.00pm Video Nation. Series in which

people use camcorders to record their views of

1990s Britain. (Coastal) (157870)

7.50pm Tax Avery. A classic cartoon (122528)

8.00pm University Challenge. Heriot-Watt

University v University College, Oxford.

The question-master is Jeremy Paxman

(Coastal) (s) (8325)

8.30pm Delta Smith's Winter Collection.

Includes prawn cocktail 2000, beef in

designer beer, and Black Forest gateau.

(Coastal) (s) (7832)

9.00pm Yes, Minister. Jim Hacker is pressured

by Sir Humphrey to discipline an efficient

local authority. With Paul Eddington.

Nigel Hawthorne and Derek Fowlds (s).

(Coastal) (4829)

9.30pm Under the Sun: Painted Babies.

BBC2. 9.45pm

10.20pm What the Papers Say. With Brown.

Maddox of the Financial Times (s)

(253238)

10.30pm Newsnight. (Coastal) (667580)

11.15pm The Big Idea. Andrew Marr's guest is

Francis Fukuyama, an American policy

analyst (s) (654899) 11.45pm Weather

(456431)

11.50pm The Midnight Hour with Andrew Neil

Pointed, chat show (s) (702412)

12.30am-5.00am The Learning Zone

CHOICE

Video Nation: State of Play

BBC2. 7.00pm

The statistics proclaim that car boot sales

and video games are among the favourite

leisure pursuits of the British in the 1990s

and both feature strongly in this latest

edition of the series. But what is also striking is

the survival of traditional activities, such as

barroom dancing, horseriding and singing

in a choir. And the golf widow is probably as

old as well. Golf. She is represented here by

Jeannette Deni, wife of a police sergeant,

who says that if she is not playing the game

it is watching it, or talking about it, or reading

about it in the magazine she is stupid enough

to buy him. The film offers another telling

statistic, that leisure time halves when

children arrive, though men still have

considerably more of it than their wives.

Women's lib has far to go.

Hollywood Men: Boys Will Be Boys

ITV. 9.00pm

Martha Raye was an engaging light comedy

star of the Thirties and Forties, best

remembered for *Hellzapoppin'* and

Chaplin's *Monteroux*. True to form,

the programme mentions none of this and

picks up on Raye towards the end of her life

when she was in a wheelchair after a series

of strokes. Enter Mark Harris, a pushy

impresario, who despite being more than 30

years younger persuaded Raye to marry him

after a three-week acquaintance. The central

portion of the film consists of an unedifying

slanging match between Harris and

Melody Cross, Raye's daughter, over the

lead star's money. And so the relentless

trawl of showbusiness sleaze goes on. Thank

goodness for Roseanne, the sit-com queen,

whose last one-liners include the following:

"The real Hollywood man is a terrified little

boy and wants his mommy."

Under the Sun: Painted Babies

BBC2. 9.45pm

Would-be Shirley Temples converge on

Alhambra, Georgia, for the

Southern Charm Pageant. The pageant

circuit can be lucrative territory for these

and their ambitious parents. Five-year-old

Brooke Breedwell has already won \$10,000

in prize money, as well as a car and a cruise.

Her main rival, Asia Mansur, is another big

name though a car has so far eluded her.

The key to Asia's success is her singing. As

she bawls out *Bill Bailey* from the back of a

car this is hard to understand. As cute and

packaged as Barbie dolls, a comparison

Brooke's pushy mum is more than happy

with, the kids prepare for the big day. It says

much for the enterprise that it is the parents,

not the youngsters, who are the bad losers.

Jane Trevelyan's film is as notable for the

brilliance of its observation as for resisting

the temptation to mock.

Short and Curries: Fathers, Sons and

Unhappy Ghosts

Channel 4. 9.45pm

CHOICE

6.00pm GMTV (2344696)

9.25pm Win, Lose or Draw (s) (4660290) 9.55

Regional News (Teletext) (6738332)

HAVE THE STARS
BECOME HOSTAGES
TO FORTUNE?

SPORT

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 31 1996

MAGUIRE HOPING
TO RETURN FOR
SANDOWN MEETING

Robson heads shortlist for England job

BY DAVID MADDOCK

THE PHONEY war is over: now the real battle commences. A five-man sub-committee of the Football Association met for precisely 30 minutes yesterday afternoon, intent upon the task of selecting the next man to take charge of the English national team. It was a fruitless meeting, Graham Kelly, the FA chief executive, commented afterwards.

None of the sub-committee members felt moved to detail their lengthy deliberations, instead offering only the fact that no announcement was imminent on the identity of their chosen successor to Terry Venables. A further meeting is to be convened within the next few weeks to discuss progress. It is understood that the sub-committee did, in fact, go as far as to draw up a shortlist of candidates that it feels are suitably qualified to fill the position when it becomes vacant after the European championship finals, which are to be held in this country in June. The usual suspects were rounded up and given a once-over, with three in particular

emerging as possible to fit the frame. Unsurprisingly, Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, heads the list. He is joined by Gerry Francis, of Tottenham Hotspur, and Glenn Hoddle, the Chelsea manager, in forming the core element of discussions. Howard Wilkinson and Kevin Keegan were also given due consideration yesterday.

Super league move 44
Ball's return 44

Since all five candidates have, at some stage, ruled themselves out of the running for the pressure-laden job, this is where the hard work really starts. Jimmy Armfield, the special adviser to the FA, has been charged with persuading one of the candidates to accept.

Keegan is considered too hard a nut to crack and he is unlikely to figure any further. Over the course of the next two weeks, however, Armfield will

speaking first to Robson, already a coach within the England set-up, to discover just how resistant he will prove to advances from the FA. There is a feeling among committee members, shared by Armfield, that some of the denials of desire to manage England have a hollow ring about them.

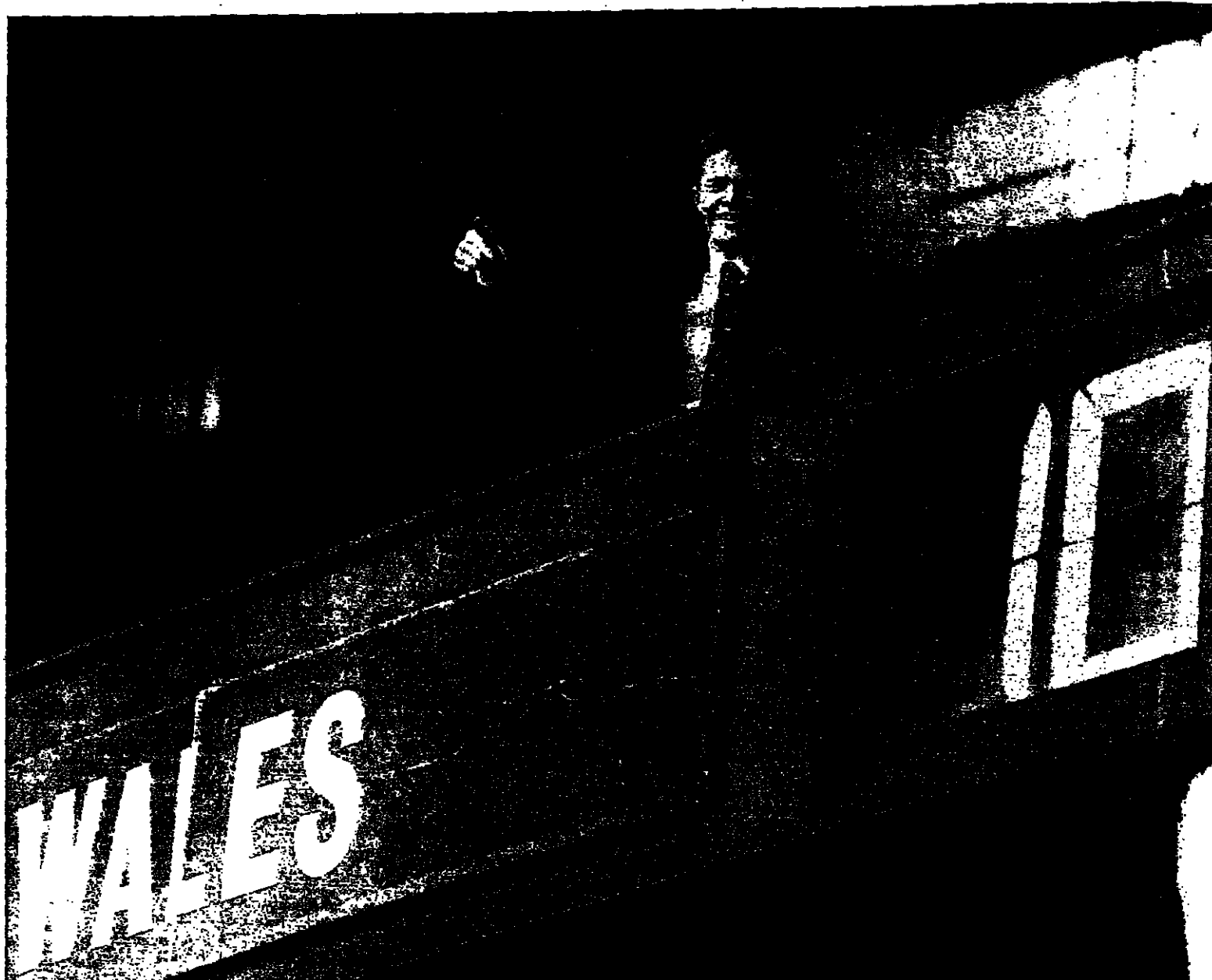
The FA is keen to avoid allowing the situation to degenerate into the near-farce of the last appointment, when Venables's selection was subject to more twists than an Agatha Christie plot. It intends to secure the acceptance of its candidate before his name is made official — hence the interlude of two weeks while Armfield makes his soundings.

Hoddle has emerged as an interesting candidate in recent weeks. Like Robson, he has issued noises suggesting that the FA would be wasting their time in making an approach. However, the policy is to go for the best man and then worry about his response only after he has been approached. Hoddle, along with Francis, can expect to see Armfield at some stage.

Last night, Chelsea were quick to offer the hope that their manager would not leave them. Ruud Gullit, the Holland international, whose presence has done so much to revive fortunes at Stamford Bridge, said he spoke for all his teammates when he hoped that the FA would not choose their leader.

"Glenn is a wonderfully talented manager and he has the ability to become the national coach, but we do not want to lose him from Chelsea," Gullit said. "He is the reason I came here and we all want him to stay."

Robson, however, remains the favourite to fill the job, perhaps in tandem with a senior figure to guide him through the early stages of his new role, should he accept any overtures from the FA. It emerged last night that Terry Venables's proposed get-together next month for his England squad has been cancelled because of heavy congestion in the fixture list. Venables held a successful meeting of his squad earlier this month, but unprecedented postponements in the fourth round of the FA Cup last weekend have prevented him from repeating the exercise.



Thomas looks forward to wearing the Wales No 10 shirt for the second time after being chosen to face England yesterday. Photograph: Huw Evans

Howley joins Thomas in Wales side

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

WALES will parade a half-back combination playing together for the first time for their opening match in rugby union's five nations' championship against England at Twickenham on Saturday. Not only has Arwel Thomas, the Bristol youngster, been retained at stand-off half, he is joined by the only newcomer in the team, Robert Howley.

Howley's promotion to scrum half is one of two changes from the side that hung on to beat Italy 31-26 earlier this month. He replaces Andy Moore, of Cardiff, who may regard himself as slightly unfortunate, and the experienced Nigel Davies returns for his 21st cap at centre, in place of Matthew Wintle, his Llanelli colleague.

Seven of the side, including Jonathan Humphreys, the captain, will be making their first appearance in the championship, but the Wales selectors, having stated their preference for youth over the past 12 months, have stuck

boldly to their guns. Only five of their chosen XV have played an international at Twickenham before, though Howley appeared there for Swansea University in the 1991 UAU final. He was on the losing side.

The selectors have resisted the temptation to recall Neil Jenkins, the country's record points-scorer, at stand-off. Jenkins proved his recovery from a cracked collarbone in a trial match on Monday evening, but Kevin Bowring, the coach, said his match fitness would be insufficient, so Thomas receives the opportunity to confirm the good impression he created against the Italians.

"Howley deserves his chance on club form," Bowring said. "We are fortunate to have a talented group of players at scrum half but Robert has a physical quality which might be needed both in attack and defence against England. Outside him, Arwel is a very brave, as well as a confident, player."

Howley's elevation has been a long time coming. Just over four years ago, Clive Norling,

FIVE NATIONS



CHAMPIONSHIP

then the Bridgend director of rugby, forecast an international future for his bright young half backs, Howley and Matthew Lewis. Now both are members of the Wales squad but Howley, 25, has taken a

couple of backward steps before finally assuming the No 9 jersey. He has occupied all the rungs on the international ladder, from schools to Wales A, but tried to hasten the process with an ill-fated move to Cardiff — swapping club places with Moore, as it happened — three years ago. His form wavered but this season he has recovered all his old snap and sparkle, to such good effect that he has been headhunted by newly-rich Saracens.

He has yet to decide whether to accept the contract offered by the north London club — and the alluring prospect of playing alongside Michael Lynagh — but strenuous efforts are being made to keep him in Wales, both by Bridgend and by the Welsh Rugby Union, which is understood to be offering him employment as a youth development officer.

Understandably, his focus now is on his Wales debut, rather than his long-term future, though this selection may well make Saracens even

more determined to secure him. "It's a matter of fine-tuning both Arwel's attributes and mine," Howley said. "We'll have to spend the next few days in each other's pockets." Both are capable runners but Welsh policy is also to spread the play and use the pace of those outside them.

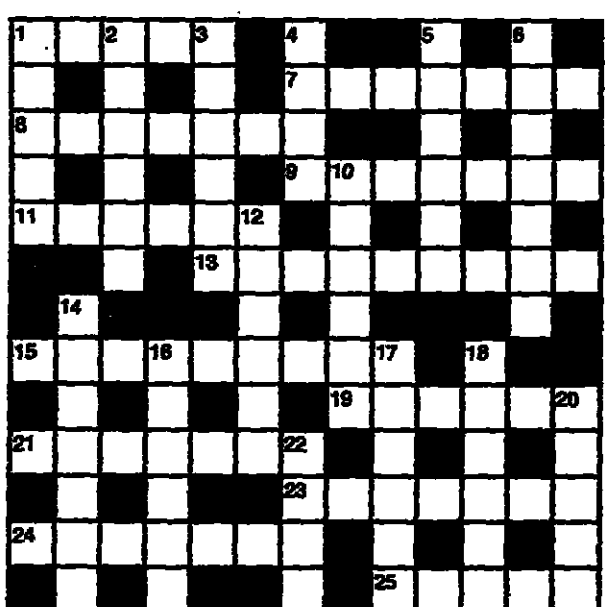
"I think the England back row will be more worried about me than I am about them," Howley said, holding out the sort of hostage to fortune he may live to regret. "They don't know much about me, I haven't played against them before."

Thomas admitted that, at 31b short of 11 stone, he would be a likely target for the big England back row, of whom Lawrence Dallaglio played against him when Bristol lost to Wasps in November. "I need to repay the Welsh selectors for the faith they have shown in me and get some tackles in," Thomas said. "I'm that small I'll probably try and run between their legs."

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TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 692



ACROSS

- 1 Door fastening (5)
- 2 Word made of initials (7)
- 3 Nasty sister of Regan (7)
- 4 Action harming oneself (3,4)
- 11 Longest river (wholly) in England (6)
- 13 Last in daydream (5,4)
- 15 Arousing lewd thoughts (9)
- 19 Throw off restraint (3,3)
- 21 Salted, knotted biscuit (7)
- 23 Joseph —, Spectator founder (7)
- 24 Holder of inquest (7)
- 25 Chew: Edward —, The Cry painter (5)

DOWN

- 2 Soldier's protective helmet (5,3)
- 3 Black area of NY (6)
- 4 Light-rim round saint, moon (4)
- 5 Open arcade (6)
- 6 Two-piece nightwear (7)
- 10 Pathetic (6)
- 12 Literary comparison (6)
- 14 Equal shares, treatment (4,3)
- 16 Dred: combat (6)
- 17 Not often (6)
- 19 (Having) come up (6)
- 20 Hit: old magazine (5)
- 22 Bird: joke (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 691

ACROSS: 1 Pivotal 5 Jung 9 Spume 10 Demeter 11 Chief of Staff 12 Scroll 13 Manque 16 Hyppochondria 19 Low-down 20 Retch 21 Ruse 22 Tibetan

DOWN: 1 Pasty 2 Voucher 3 The real McCoy 4 Ladlow 6 Ultra 7 Giraffe 8 Smash-and-grab 12 Scholar 14 Quinier 15 Sinner 17 Poxies 18 Shun

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD NO 687

ACROSS: 1 Ne plus ultra 7 Arnel 8 Drastic 10 Diamond 11 Wile 13 Riches 15 Severe 17 Haul 19 Hall mast 21 Laitone 22 Omaha 25 Contact lens

DOWN: 1 Neanderthal 2 Panda 3 Unleaded 4 Update 5 Team 6 Astride 9 Crustaceans 12 Seafront 14 Caustic 16 Camera 19 Amaze 20 Firm

1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLANDS domestic or international network is J Park, Ambleside, Cumbria.
2nd PRIZE of a return ticket to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLANDS domestic network is P Smith, Insh, Aberdeenshire. All flights subject to availability.

Marriage of codes sealed in Leeds

Christopher Irvine on a plan for union
and league to share ground and players

Mutual loathing over 100 years has given way to an extraordinary co-operation between the rugby codes, with former rivals toasting one another in fine wines at the marriage of convenience in Leeds yesterday between the city's rugby league and rugby union clubs.

Until union went openly professional 157 days ago, it was a match made in hell. Then the league club offered its Headingley home, its worldly goods in their best talents such as Garry Schofield and Alan Tait, and the union club came running, with £2.25 million on deposit from the sale of its Kirkstall ground half a mile away.

Brian Walker, deputy leader of Leeds City Council, described it as "good old Yorkshire common sense". Good old business sense is what it actually makes. The ground-share agreement cov-

ers five years, the duration of the Super League contract. In a throw-away line, Mike Palmer-Jones, the union club chairman, gave the game away: "It is possible that within that period there could be only one code of rugby."

If some form of hybrid is the future, then Leeds obviously want to be first in on the act. A combination of the respective forces of Wigan and Orrell and Salford and Sale might not be far behind. With the switch by rugby league to summer, the union club will take up winter-time residence at Headingley in September. As most league players would be available shortly afterwards, Denis Greenwood, the Leeds chairman, said he would release

individuals to the union side. "We'd have any of them," Palmer-Jones admitted.

Although at the wrong end of the Courage Clubs Championship fourth division, Leeds underlined their ambition by the recent appointment of Phil Davies as director of rugby. The former Wales forward not only now has the best ground facilities in the game, but has at his disposal former union players in Tait, Jim Fallon and Harvey Howard who converted to league, and league players, such as Schofield, who are keen to try union.

It will doubtless require more of an incentive than the £100 win-money that the union club pays. Nonetheless, it is clear that the "rental" deal

struck by Widnes for John Devereux, the former Wales centre, to play 16 matches for Sale next season, is merely the first of its type.

At this stage, Leeds do not see any movement from the union club their way, but the establishment of a joint centre of rugby excellence offers an intriguing prospect.

A problem for the union club is that its 200-strong crowds — 60 times smaller than the league club's average — will be lost in a 20,000-capacity stadium. Even Bramley, who have been based at Kirkstall since August, gain double the union club's attendance.

However, with a rugby public wanting their winter fix at Headingley and the possibility of Leeds players turning their hand to the 15-man game, union club officials are confident of attracting greater support.

Black boxes to aid bid for grand prix safety

MAX MOSLEY, the president of the International Motor Sport Federation, took a new step in the drive for improved safety in grand prix racing yesterday when he revealed that Formula One cars are to be fitted with black boxes, similar to those used in aeroplanes, to record their behaviour in the seconds before a crash (Oliver Holt writes).

Mosley, who has also pioneered campaigns to use Formula One technology in road safety, said that the data-logging devices would be used on an experimental basis on some cars midway through this season, before their full implementation at the beginning of 1997.

The intention is that the boxes will give the sport's governing body a wealth of information about how the cars react when they career out of control, and how effectively they are slowed by existing safety precautions such as gravel traps and tyre barriers.

Mosley said that the introduction of the boxes was part of the legacy of the death of Ayrton Senna, the three-time world champion, at the 50th Grand Prix in 1994. If Senna's car had been fitted with one, he said, it would have revealed beyond doubt what caused his fatal accident, and would help explain the factors behind Mika Hakkinen's serious dent at the Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide November.

"We need information to us exactly what happens to cars go off the track," Mosley said. "If we learn more about that, we should be able to them hitting barriers."

